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VOLUME XV. MDCCCCIX.

The Bibelot

A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, chosen in part from scarce editions and sources not generally known . . . .

Printed for Thomas B. Mosher and Publish'd by him at 45 Exchange Street, Portland, Maine

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Portland, Maine
THOMAS B. MOSHER
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The Bibelot

IN *reprinting the entire text of Simeon Solomon's sole contribution to literature we may well congratulate our readers that in addition to Mr. Swinburne's essay*[1] *we are at the last moment able to append a contemporary review of the* Vision *by John Addington Symonds, which for almost four decades has remained lying "out of sight out of mind" in the pages of the London* Academy.[2]

We were, indeed, tempted to make use of an article by Mr. Robert Ross in this same tried and true expositor of literary excellence under date of Dec. 23, 1905, but with the Symonds causerie *before us it was hardly worth while, seeing that Mr. Ross has no word which even remotely goes to explain the poem.*[3] *Other than a closing observation that it "ought to be republished*

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1 *Already given in* The Bibelot, vol. xiv *pp. 291-316. (September, 1908.)*

2 *See the* Academy, vol. ii, *pp. 189-190. (April 1, 1871.)*

3 *Inferentially he does attempt to limn — some might maliciously say dislimb! — the artist. "Physically he was a small, red man, with keen, laughing eyes," and, "When I had the pleasure of seeing him*

along with Mr. Swinburne's noble eulogy" — we have now complied with the demand and await such reception as our British cousins sometimes extend to us — we are told nothing as to its history, if a privately printed volume of such obscurity and limited sale can be said to have had a history.[4]

And for ourselves having said what in brief the book means to us, we can do no more and no better than offer it untampered with, precisely as it came from the poet-artist's brain, in the hope that if admirers are few they are at least genuine; believing that those who truly care for rare and beautiful things will find far removed from the cark of commercialism such vision of perfect loveliness as once seen abides forever.

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last he was extremely cheerful and not aggressively alcoholic." It is to be hoped that Mrs. Ford who met and conversed with Solomon at a much later date will have something of more decided interest in her forthcoming Simeon Solomon: An Appreciation. By Julia Ellsworth Ford. With 21 illustrations. Quarto. ($3.50 *net.*) Edition limited to 300 copies. F. F. Sherman, 42 West 39th St., New York.

4 *In Mr. Bertram Dobell's interesting* Catalogue of Books Printed for Private Circulation, (*London, 1906*) *there is this entry:* Solomon's (Simeon) A Mystery of Love in Sleep. Crown 8vo. pp. 15. 7s. 6d. 1871. *For once I venture to believe this very accurate bibliographer and friend of mine to be in error.*

A VISION OF LOVE REVEALED IN SLEEP
By
SIMEON SOLOMON.

[A VISION OF LOVE | REVEALED IN SLEEP | [*Motto:*] Until the day break | And the shadows flee away | SONG OF SONGS | BY | SIMEON SOLOMON | *London* | *Printed for the author* | *To be had also of F. S. Ellis, 33 King Street, Covent Garden* | *1871.*

Quarto, (7½ x 10¼) Frontispiece. Pp. iv: 1-37, followed by three blank pages. Bound in smooth dark blue cloth, with title and author's name in block letters, also motto between two different designs all stamped in gold on upper cover. Following title-page there is this dedicatory inscription: URBI . ROMAE . MENSI . MAIO . ANNO . MDCCCLXIX | IN MEMORIAM | D . D . D]

A VISION OF LOVE REVEALED IN SLEEP.

UPON the waning of the night, at that time when the stars are pale, and when dreams wrap us about more closely, when a brighter radiance is shed upon our spirits, three sayings of the wise King came unto me. These are they:—*I sleep, but my heart waketh;* also, *Many waters cannot quench love;* and again, *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away;* and I fell to musing and thinking much upon them. Then there came upon me a vision, and behold, I walked in a land that I knew not, filled with a strange light I had not seen before; and I was clad as a traveller. In one hand I carried a staff, and I hid the other in the heavy folds of a colourless garment; I went forward with my eyes cast upon the earth, pondering, and dazed as one who sets forth upon a journey, but who knows not yet its goal. Then I besought my spirit to make itself clearer before me, and to show me, as in a glass, what I sought; then knowledge came upon me, and I looked within my spirit, and I saw my

yearning visibly manifested, and great desire was born, and sprang forth and strengthened my feet and quickened my steps. Now I stood among olive-trees, whose leaves and boughs lay still upon the air, and no light was cast upon them. Then the deep silence was broken by the stirring of the spirit within me; my frame appeared to be rent, and a faintness fell upon me, and for a little space I knew nothing, so powerfully the spirit wrought within me. Then afterwards, as when one who works miracles lays his healing finger upon another who is maimed, and makes him whole, so was my strength renewed, and I lifted up my eyes; and behold, the form of one stood by me, unclothed, save for a fillet binding his head, whereof the ends lay upon either side his neck; also upon his left shoulder hung a narrow vestment; in his right hand he bore a branch of dark foliage, starred with no blossoms; his face had on it the shadow of glad things unattained, as of one who has long sought but not found, upon whom the burden of humanity lies heavy; his eyes, half shaded by their lashes, gave forth no light.

I knew that my Soul stood by me, and he and I went forth together; and I also knew that the visible images of those things which we know only by name were about to be manifested unto me. When I gazed into the lampless eyes of my Soul, I felt that I saw into the depths of my own spirit, shadow meeting shadow. Then my Soul first spoke, and said unto me, *Thou hast looked upon me, and thou knowest me well, for in me thou but seest thyself, not hidden and obscured by the cruel veil of the flesh. I am come forth of thee for thy well-doing, therefore see to it that thou do me no injury. By me shalt thou attain unto the end I know thou seekest, for he whom we go forth to find may only in his fulness be manifested by my aid; for when he appears to those who, with dimmed eyes, grope in the waking darkness of the world, I am put aside, and he is not fully known. By me alone shalt thou behold him as he absolutely is; but in visions shall he be seen of thee many times before his full light be shed upon thee, and thy spirit shall be chastened and saddened because of them, but it shall not utterly faint. Look upon me, and I will support thee, and in thy need I will bear thee up. Looking upon me thou shalt read*

thine inmost self, as upon a scroll, and in my aspect shall thy spirit be made clear. Come.

Then we went forth towards a dim sea at ebb, lying under the veil of the mysterious twilight of dawn. On its grey sands sat one whom I knew for Memory. Over her face passed the changeful alternations of sun and cloud, shade and shine; the voice of the shell which she held to her ear unburied the dead cycles of the soul; it sang to her of good and evil things gone by, and her introverted eyes looked upon them as when one looks in a mirror upon all else save oneself. My Soul turned his dusky eyes upon me, and then I too heard the voice of the shell; and the ocean cast up my dead before my eyes, and all was unto me as though it had not gone by. Memory bore upon her head and breast a light rain of faded autumn leaves and blossoms, and upon her raiment small flecks of foam had already dried; her lips trembled with the unuttered voices of the past, but she did not weep.

Then I was carried back in the spirit to the time past, and as I walked forth by my Soul, my gaze was drawn inward, and I

beheld myself in one of the sunny places of the world; and there was a mist arising from the joy of nature, and my spirit seemed to dance within me. And I beheld, after a space, that the mist formed itself into many visible objects, which all gave me a delight such as one feels in looking upon the golden circles which play within the depths of a sun-lighted pool; and beyond the mist I discerned the forms of many whom Memory brought back to me; they had no radiance about their heads, but their countenances bore no shadow upon them, and the light in the air wherein they moved made a music which was very pleasant unto me. As the heart sits enthroned within the body, and its pulses inform it, so sat one in their midst whose spirit made their feet to dance and their mouths to sing; she rested beneath the shade of an autumn apple-tree, and the sun had kissed her body as it had kissed the fruit of the tree and made it glow: she was naked, but guile was removed from her, therefore she knew it not: the aspect of her face was as that of the face of a child who hears new things, and holds its breath, lest the one who relates them should make too

quick an end; her grey eyes looked forth without fear, and in their soft depths were mirrored the things about her that she loved so well; by her side sported all joyous, simple creatures, and she was of them and one with them; the shadow of the burden of consciousness had not fallen upon her; she had not known the sickness of the soul, for within the ark of her body the soul had found no resting-place. Looking upon her, I saw that she was good, but I knew that there was that about her that left me not content; she was even as sweet notes heard once and lost for ever.

Then I withdrew my gaze from my spirit, and raised my eyes and looked upon my Soul, and he spoke these words unto me: *It is well that thou hast thus looked upon Pleasure which is past, for with the greater ardour dost thou now desire him whom we go forth to seek: canst thou bear to look forward?* Then, as we went along, while the shallow wave drew back from the grey beach, my spirit took upon itself a great sadness; and lifting my eyes I beheld one, whom I then knew not, seeking shelter in the cleft of a rock. The shame that had

been done him had made dim those thrones of Charity — his eyes; and as the wings of a dove, beaten against a wall, fall weak and frayed, so his wings fell about his perfect body; his locks, matted with the sharp moisture of the sea, hung upon his brow, and the fair garland on his head was broken, and its leaves and blossoms fluttered to the earth in the chill air. He held about him a sombre mantle, in whose folds the fallen autumn leaves had rested: and now he came forth of his sheltering place, and as he went along the light upon his head was blown about in thin flames by the cold breath of the sea; and I saw moving beside him in the grey air the spirits of those who had brought him to this pass, and the sound of their mockings fell upon my ears. Then my spirit sighed very heavily within me, and I could look no longer, for I discerned in that company the image of myself; and then all this vision passed away.

I held my regard upon the earth, and marvelled at what I had seen; and I communed in sadness with my spirit, for I then knew the part I had taken to hold Love in contumely, and how I had been one of those

who plant rue, thinking to behold myrtles spring therefrom; and my spirit being chastened, I lifted my eyes to my Soul, and I saw upon his face the pale light of sorrow; yet I remembered how he spoke to me at the first, and told me that he would uphold me, and that my spirit should not faint utterly. Then he and I went on gradually ascending a sandy slope, patched here and there with scanty grass; and against the pale sky we saw one, for whom, looking upon him, my Soul dissolved in tears, so stricken with unavailing sorrow was he, so wounded beyond the hope of healing, bound hand and foot, languishing under the weight of his humanity, crushed with the burden of his so great tenderness. I looked upon the face of my Soul, and I knew that he, in whose presence we now stood, was Love, dethroned and captive, bound and wounded, bereft of the natural light of his presence; his wings drooping, broken and torn, his hands made fast to the barren and leafless tree; the myrtles upon his brow withered and falling; and upon that heart, from whose living depths should proceed the voice of the revolving spheres, there was a

wound flowing with blood, but changing into roses of divinest odour as it fell. I stood motionless, my eyes refusing to look longer upon my stricken lord, then drawn unto my Soul, from whom I had no comfort; the voice of the shell of Memory yet sounded in my ears, and I knew that the divine captive read my spirit's inmost thoughts; from his lips proceeded inaudibly the words, *Thou hast wounded my heart.*

After a moment of mystical agony, I raised my eyes; and behold, the vision of Love was gone. Yea, and upon my own heart the words of Love became engraven, and ringed it about with flame; and then I knew to the full how my hands had been among those which had bound and wounded Love thus. Albeit my spirit found how unworthy it was to receive the odour of the roses which came forth of his heart, yet it clung about me, and became as it were a crown to my head, and I was even lifted up because of my humiliation. Then I turned unto my Soul, and saw that his gaze was bent upon me with pity, and he spoke these words: *Alas! look well into thy spirit, search thy heart and pluck from it its dead garlands,*

cast them from thee and make it clean, and prepare it for him who shall hereafter enter therein; thou art even puffed up because the wound thou hast been one of those to deal sends forth divine fragrance; rather lament that thou hast not left whole the temple whence it comes forth: of thee and of thy like is its destruction: let us go upon our way. Then we set forward, and silence was between us; the burden upon my spirit lay very heavy, and I knew not how to raise my eyes.

And now a sound of great lamentation clove the dull air; it was as the wail the mother lifts up when the last of the fruit of her body is wrested from her; it was as the cry of one whose anguish may know no respite, whose soul is rent and cast abroad; it entered deep into my spirit. Then he who walked by me spake these words: *Canst thou lift thy gaze upon her who comes across the sea, upon her who is ravening like it, and is one with it? Look well upon her, for thou shalt behold in her one who would dash thee aside from the path which thou hast chosen. Look well unto thy heart, lest her breath dry up its springs. Behold.* Then I looked out to sea, and there came towards us one whose

name I knew was Passion, she who had wounded and had sought to slay Love, but who, in her turn, was grievously wounded and tormented in strange, self-devised ways. The glory of her head was changed into the abiding-place of serpents whose malice knew no lull; her wasted beauty preyed upon itself; her face was whitened with pale fires, a hollow image of unappeased desire; her eyes flowed with unavailing tears; in her right hand she bore a self-wrought sword of flame, and in her left the goodly fruits and flowers she held were scorched and withered, and crawled upon by evil things; her feet were bound in inextricable folds; she was borne forth she knew not whither; her breath was as the breath of the hungry sea, and rest shall not be given unto her. And then the gentle voice of Memory spoke to me, and told me how she who was thus tormented had been at the first like unto her whom I saw in the spirit beneath the shade of the apple-tree, lying in the light of peace; and how the sun had also shone upon her, and made her face to shine; but she looked beyond the fair and happy things that were about her, and lusted after she

knew not what; and then the pleasant place wherein she abode with her happy fellows was taken from her, and, as one who hungers after what he has wittingly lost unto himself, so she craved and was not satisfied; she set at naught the gracious things that had been given unto her, and became the paramour of Hate; then she went about seeking to woo Love to her evil ends, and she fared to him as one humble and poorly clad; and Love had pity upon her, and bent his ear to her supplications, for he knew her not; but anon her aspect waxed cruel, and fierce, deceitful flames went forth of her eyes, and dreadful things clung about her, and shamed the air that he made holy, and with her fiery breath she well-nigh slew him; and when I looked upon her and knew that she would have slain Love, pity was congealed in my heart. Then the voice of the shell spoke to me by the spirit, and said, *Thou hast no pity on thyself.* And this vision also passed from us.

Then my Soul spoke unto me these words: *It is even so, thou hast no pity on thyself, for thou too hast essayed to slay Love, as it has been shown to thee, thou hast wounded him:*

let us set forth, and I will show thee a vision of that which may yet be averted. Then we fared along by the sea, and its hollow breath fell sore upon my spirit: and anon we came upon a crowd who all bore different aspects, and again among these I chose forth one who was myself; some were mocking, and some carried an air of scorn upon them, and others of deceit; some feigned mourning, and others were not moved by what they saw. Then I approached, bent down by a great awe of sorrow; and through my tear-dulled lashes I looked upon him who had been bound and wounded. He lay as one without life; the voice of his heart was dead within him; looking upon his face it seemed as if the end of all had come, and the air about him was laden with lamentations; upon his pallid brow one had thrown a spray of yew, but his body lay untended, and none had clothed him with his last garment; a thin flame rose from his heart and hovered upon it; and the cords wherewith he had been bound to the tree yet confined his hands, his feet, and his shattered wings; the light about his head had gone, and in its place the sea-froth made a crown; they who

were gathered about him when we drew near had left him one by one. For myself a burning shame wrapped me round, and I sank upon the earth, and utterly abased my spirit for a space; then I heard the voice of my Soul speaking to me, and I lifted my eyes, and behold, the dolorous vision was gone. And, my heart laden with weeping, I turned unto my Soul, and he said these words unto me: *Did I not tell thee at the first that whilst thou hadst me by thy side, and didst me no injury, thy spirit should not utterly faint; therefore be not cast down at the grievous vision we go forth from beholding, but lay it as a sign upon thy heart; so shalt thou be warned in good time. We now bend our steps towards one who is mighty indeed, and it is given to no man to overcome him; yet when thou shalt look upon him, thou shalt see of how mild an aspect he is, and so thou shalt put terror away from thee. Come.*

And we yet went forth by the sea, until we came upon a temple standing alone; the breath from the heart of the sea came up as the litanies of the dead who lay beneath it, and girt it about and fell cold upon my spirit, and well-nigh made the pulses of my

life to cease; but my Soul, faithful as when he first bent his eyes upon me by the olive-trees, supported me; and the door of the temple being touched by the branch which he bore, opened of itself, and my spirit yearned for the further and dreadful mystery that was to be shown me. It was well for me that there abode one beside me who would hold me up, or my heart, frozen within my breast, would have refused to support me, fainting as I was. I raised my eyes, whereof the light had gone out in the black air about us, and sought help of my Soul. He bent towards me, and said, *Cast fear from thee. Behold, thou shalt not fail.*

Before us and over us was a shadow as of the darkness before all things were; Hope was removed from the midst of it, and, looking upon it, Despair seemed to be enthroned therein; and the spirit wholly forgot that light had ever sprung forth upon the universe. Again I sought succour of him who stood beside me, and again it was vouchsafed to me: then, essaying to strengthen my eyes, I looked forward, and I beheld, slowly revealing himself in the heart of the thick darkness, one seated upon a dim and

awful throne; he was wrapt about with sighs for raiment, and cypress, heavy with the tears of ages, was the crown upon his head; although his face was hidden in his potent hands when first he was manifested to my sight, yet I knew he wept, and his weeping was as the gathered-up lamentations of all time; how sore it fell upon my heart I may not say; and a great pity was begotten within me, which went forth upon my spirit, towards his throne. Anon he lifted his face, and the sadness and mourning which go forth of the hearts of all men seemed transfigured upon it, and I saw that it was overshadowed with the dark mystery of life: it appeared to me as the face of one who dwells for ever without the Holy Place, upon whose brow the highest radiance may never fall. Then I thought upon the words my Soul had spoken to me, before we entered herein, when he told me how mild of aspect was the face I should look upon. For I saw that his mien had in it an exceeding gentleness, as of a creature that desires to caress and to be caressed, but who dares not approach, lest he bring terror with him —as of one who throughout all eternity

bears upon him a loveless burden, whereof he may not rid himself: his was the pallor of one who had wrestled with another strong as himself, and had prevailed, but whose own dominion was as gall to him, the knowledge of whose hateful might gnawed his own spirit through and through with an unquenchable fire, whose power was his humiliation, whose strength his weakness. For a moment's space I could not look upon him, for the memories of his prowess crowded within my heart, and surged up in a bitter stream into my eyes. Then I sought the face of my Soul, and I saw upon its darkness the answer to my unuttered question, and I knew that I stood in the presence of him who had done battle with Love, Death, who would love us did he dare, whom we would love did we dare; for, when he folds us about with the chill white raiment, he sets the seal of his love upon us; and, as the bridegroom and the bride stand linked together, overshadowed by the mystic saffron-coloured veil, and one spirit makes them one; so, at that hour when time slips from us, are we wedded to him before whom I stood, and with the sacra-

ment of his kiss he signs us unto himself, and makes us of one flesh with him.

Then I lifted my eyes and looked yet again, and I saw that one stood by the throne, who held his finger upon his lip; he bore in one hand a crystal globe wherefrom the eyes of Death were ever averted, for he might not look therein; upon his head there bloomed a lotos flower, and lotos flowers hid his feet; the fathomless silence of the tomb came up and clothed him as with a pall, and he was girdled round with mystery, and mystery was written upon the air about him; his eyes were fixed upon the globe he held, and made dim because of what he saw therein; and the secrets of the tomb came forth and racked his face, and his face sweated with the pallid fires that rose from the dead he looked upon. And now my spirit welled up beseechingly within me, and looked forth of my eyes, and I turned them upon my Soul's face, as if supplicating; and his face was towards mine, and he knew the question that rested upon my lips, and he spoke and said, *Seek not to look upon the globe, for thou assuredly knowest it is given to no man to search its depths and live. He who*

bears it is Eternal Silence. Behold how his face is seared and furrowed with the things he knows, with the secrets that are laid bare to him. Let his name be a sign unto thee. He ceased to speak, and my spirit was drawn inward, and I pondered upon what he who brooded upon the throne before me had wrought; and I marvelled the more at his might when I had seen how humble of demeanour he was; and these thoughts came upon me: — When he had rent asunder those newly come together and made one, when he had set at nought the bitter desire of years and the late-found joy, did he wear upon his countenance that great sadness, well-nigh sweet? When the shriek of the mother shattered the night, because the sole one left of her withered blossoms had been plucked by him, and she was left as an uprooted plant cast upon the wave, was he then crowned with humility? When I thought upon those who had made the face of her that bare them to shine, and were as the sun's kiss to her, and how he had wrapt them in his chill raiment one by one in her sight, and I looked upon his eyes whence the tears ceased not to flow, my

heart failed within me, and my marvelling became too hard for me. Then I turned towards my Soul and sought his gaze; he fixed it upon me, and spoke these words: *I have read thine inmost thoughts, and they are hard indeed. Of the thing whereon thou hast pondered thou canst, of thy nature, know nothing, but only this:— When he, before whom we stand, bends his face over those whose spirits wing them away, he takes upon it the exceeding gentleness thou hast seen, albeit it is not beheld of them who stand by sorrowing; for they have not looked upon his face; therefore they know it not until he lays his finger upon their lips, and touches them with his own. Let us go forth upon our way.* And he led me as who should lead one lately risen from the couch of disease, weak, and before whom the earth seems to spin, and darkness was upon us.

And my Soul said, *Raise thine eyes and behold somewhat which shall gladden them, as it hath gladdened all men before. Let the balm of this vision sink into thy spirit; so shall it make thee whole of the sickness that came upon thee in the house of Death.* I lifted my eyes, and I saw coming towards us what had the appearance of a bird moving softly along

the still, grey air. As it approached us, I perceived two presences, one reclining upon the other who gently fanned the air with great wings. And now a deep calm fell upon my spirit, such as one feels when the burden of a sharp trouble is averted, and my Soul and I wept when we saw him who was being thus carried towards us; he lay lightly across the breast of his supporter, cheek reposing against cheek; upon his head were two small fair wings, and round his brow were bound the flowers and buds of poppies; upon his face there shone a distant light of childhood; his parted lips breathed forth peace; the one who bore him smiled upon him, and rejoiced because of his burden. I knew that he who was winged was called Divine Charity, and his charge Sleep.

When we went forth out of the temple wherein abode Death, we came to a strange land stretching far out towards the wan sea, and inland the earth was overgrown with rank weeds; and ever the voice of the shell of Memory sounded in my ears, and the land to right and left of me seemed to image my past years; the comfort which I

had had of Sleep departed from me, and when I sought the eyes of my Soul no rays of consolation came forth therefrom, no blossoms of golden light yet starred the dull branch he bore: the shadow of the house of Death lay heavy upon him.

Albeit the burden of great bitterness that was shed upon my spirit by him I saw upon the gloomy throne had choked up the springs of my heart, yet within my breast the flame of yearning towards him who should be the end and crown of my journeying burst forth and impelled me onward; and my spirit told me that in a short space I should look upon him, in what guise I knew not. Therefore I turned my questioning eyes upon my Soul, and a light of sadness fell upon me from his face, and he spoke and said these words: *Alas! not yet shall it be vouchsafed unto thee to behold him in his sovereign glory, clad in radiance, but thou shalt see him as he has been carried forth whence we last looked upon him with grief-dulled eyes, when he was as one bereft of life. He, whose bliss it was to make his burden Love, is a supreme spring of pity, and men laving themselves in the streams that go forth of him,*

account them blessed; the hurt that has been done them passes by; they are made whole, for he slowly, yet surely, heals them; in his arms the broken of spirit are cherished; and when he holds the hearts that are cleft to his breast they are once more bound together. And raised my eyes after he had spoken these words, and sought to gather strength to look upon the coming vision.

Now again two came towards us, one bearing the other, and treading down the dark growth of weeds that thickened about us. When I saw him who reposed in the other's arms, a trembling seized me, and an awe came upon me — the awe which is begotten of exceeding pity: around his head shone a faint and flickering light, his white and perfect body was flecked here and there with blood, and, as when we saw him by the sea, betrayed, wounded, and helpless. He who supported him was ravaged with the storms of ages; in his eyes there shone a light of infinite memories; in his ears there rang the voices of unnumbered years; his mien had in it the great tenderness of one unconquerable; as a mother encircles with her arms a beloved and sor-

rowing child, and softly murmurs to him the songs of his infancy, so he pressed his bruised and smitten charge to his breast, comforting him with the universal voice.

And when this vision was fulfilled, the shell of Memory again sang in my ears, and I knew that what had past was the image of somewhat long gone by; and I humbled my spirit when I knew that I had been among those who consign Love to the arms of Time; casting the potent lord upon the earth, and taking no heed of him; leaving the bruises wherewith he had been buffeted to be tended perchance of none. The earth was now covered with poppies, and the air was heavy with their odours, and I would fain have sought Sleep, but that I knew it was forbidden unto me; moreover, it was given me to know by my Soul, through the spirit, that another vision was shortly to be vouchsafed unto me. The air was murmurous with faint sounds borne on the odour of the poppies: these were the echoes of the voices of my past years. I again sought the eyes of him who walked beside me, and, by the pale light of the first stars, I saw reflected in their depths the vague image

of something which stamped a calm upon them; yet, as we set forth along that mystic land, our hearts were still burdened with the weariness of sorrow hard to cast away from us. Then, as my Soul turned towards me, I saw, in the shadows that gained strength about us, that a great presence was gathering itself, and, as we gazed upward, our vision rested upon one seated; around her head burned the light of the new-born stars, whose harmony made glad the pulses of the air; from her wide brow went forth a healing balm; in her aspect all men seek their rest and hide them in her shadow. She bore upon her knees one still beautiful, but pallid with woes, riven with wasting troubles, weary and dying; within her heart she hid his passing spirit; the waning golden light about him faded in the gloom of her hair, the falling blossoms of his head lightly strewed her dusky raiment wherewith she wholly enfolded him; he sank beneath her sacramental kiss, and Day was lulled to death in the all-embracing arms of Night.

And now we went forth upon our dimly lighted path, where the red and purple of the poppies faded into sombre grey beneath

the faint rays of the lately risen stars, and the depths of the still pools which lay to right and left of us sent up their pale reflections, and ever the utterances of the sea of my life spoke to me by the voice of the shell of Memory: and this night seemed to be a figure of my years gone by.

After my spirit had bent itself to the pondering of these things, I turned towards my Soul, and I saw that his eyes were heavy with the sense of what was to come; also my spirit leapt up, for albeit I was yet ignorant of what was to be shown forth, a voice within me told me that it should be of much import; and I bent towards him who was with me and gazed earnestly upon him, as one importunate, and who sought to be prepared and made ready to receive what would be to his great benefit. And my Soul, seeing my urgency, spoke and said, *Look well upon this shortly to befall us, and take great heed unto it, for it will be of weight to thee; and it shall be, as it were, the opening of the scroll whereon we may read the rest. He, whom we relax not in seeking, shall again be revealed unto thee; but, alas, again the pulses of thy heart shall fail when thou seest*

him; and by the lesson of the vision shalt thou learn that thou art yet unready to behold him in his fulness; yea, and this shall not be the last trial put upon thee. Now shall be set forth before thee somewhat of the history of his shame whom we seek, and, how, as one who brushes not away the cobwebs that have gathered themselves together upon the fair sculpture of one divine, and has even said Ha, ha, at the spiders busy upon it; so have men laid upon him the darkness of the earth, as a thick veil wherethrough his light shall not come. I cease; the vision will unfold itself clearly in thine eyes. Then I looked forward, and I saw that we approached what appeared to be a temple in ruin, long forsaken and not remembered; its crumbling marble walls and pillars, worn by time and storms, glimmered dimly beneath the stars; about it lay the decayed fragments of its dead beauty, and its entrances were choked up with poppies and clinging weeds, but to my spiritual vision there appeared a radiance about it that made me know that the light of him whom I sought penetrated the depths of its enduring gloom. Our heads bowed, and in silence we approached the entrance; we put

aside the rank growths which sought to hinder our going in, and stood on its grass-grown threshold; then the silence of my heart was broken by its weeping, and a faintness fell upon me when I lifted up my eyes to the vision now revealed to me. Before us was an altar-like monument carved with a legend of old time, whereon the joyful creatures who sported in procession across it were wasting in decay, time-discoloured and riven; upon it he lay, whom, when we stood in the presence of Death, we saw borne to earth by Divine Charity; he was wrapped about with the slumber of those upon whom no shadow has fallen, upon his face there lay that far-off light of childhood; the mildness of his half-formed smile drew the spirit unto itself, his lashes were yet moist with late-shed tears, born not of sorrow but of tenderness; looking upon him, our wave-tossed spirits found their haven, and rest fell upon us.

Before I dared to look upon him who was present with Sleep, and whom I have not wearied of seeking, I saw by the spirit that one rose impalpably from the heart of the poppies, and hovered upon them, lapped

in his half-shut wings; his eyes were not covered by their lids, yet it seemed as if slumber had fallen upon them; he fixed his mystic gaze upon a crystal globe he held in both his hands, wherein I knew by the spirit he saw pass the dreams of those who sleep beneath the stars; his locks were softly lifted by the air, and his lips trembled with the weight of the myriads of visions he called forth; his bent face was overshadowed by the exceeding sadness of one who knows the thoughts of men.

Again I raised my eyes, and I saw her who had lately been revealed to us receiving the passing breath of day; with unrelaxing gaze, and eyes from whose depths comes forth all gentleness, she watched Sleep, her beloved son; and she, to whom all was as an open scroll, wept when she looked upon him whose heart was as the heart of a little child; her dusky locks flowed forth upon the air, and from their shade the stars sent down their beams; her garments were fragrant with the blossoms begotten of Day's death, and hymns proceeded from the silence that was about her; upon her all-supporting arms, and hidden in her raiment,

she bore those who slept and dreamed, and those who watched; she whispered peace unto those who know it not when she is not; she put away from them the sword, and healed the wounds that gape and bleed when she is not by to close them; she drew the spirit of the mother to her child who dwells in far-off lands, and in her arms the long-separated were brought together; beneath her shadow the lost little one yet again nestled upon her mother's breast; she hid the stricken in her heart, by her the forsaken were taken back to the hearts of the forsakers; she brooded over the uncared-for with the soft care of her wings, and by her the forgotten were brought to remembrance.

Then I sought my Soul in trembling, for I knew that there was one present on whom I had not yet dared to look, and my Soul said to me by the spirit, *Behold him whom we seek, but we are not yet prepared.* Then I turned my gaze upon him; in the gloom of the unremembered temple he sat in all lowliness upon the fragment of a broken frieze, whereon the sculptured histories of his ancient glory crumbled and fell away,

forgotten and uncared for, blighted by the breath of ages, stained with the rust of storms that know no mercy; his red and golden raiment hung loose about his limbs, and the blossoms from his hair had fallen crisped and dead upon his shoulders; the tears of a divine agony yet lay upon his cheek; the radiance which I had seen by my spirit, before my feet had gained the threshold of the temple, sprang from the wound upon his heart; and when I looked upon and saw it illumine the dim eyes of my Soul, my spirit abased itself, and my gaze fell upon the earth. Then I knew that this vision had been fulfilled, and my heart, ringing with the inner voices of the things that had been revealed to us, and my eyes laden with their images, I again turned unto my Soul, and saw that upon his countenance rested the light that came forth of Love's wound, and made it shine; and, as we departed from the temple, I rejoiced secretly at this; also I felt strengthened and gladdened at heart because of Sleep; and my spirit was softened by reason of his smile. And we turned our steps towards the waning stars.

And the awe which comes upon man at the passing away of night fell upon us, and I bethought me again of the words of the wise king, *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.* And a strong yearning was begotten within me, and a sob burst forth from my mouth up out of my heart, and my lips said inaudibly, *Ah, that the day would break, and the shadows verily and indeed flee away;* and the spirit essayed to escape, and in travail I sought help of my Soul, and it was given unto me, and he spoke these words: *Put thy sorrowing away from thee, for the sword shall not again cruelly cleave thy spirit; yet, as I told thee before we stood upon the threshold of the ruined temple we have erewhile left, another trial shall be laid upon thee, and the spirit must needs crouch beneath the weight of it; but, albeit sorrow shall go up as a mist before thee, when thou beholdest what is at hand, thou shalt see, as behind a thick cloud, the presence of light; in the coming vision shall be dimly heralded his effulgence; it shall appear in thine eyes as it were the strong weeping that goes before joy; and as the springing forth of hope from despair: it shall not be seen of thee as a dark mystery; thy spirit will look into it*

and know it. He made an end of speaking, and by the pale beams of the sinking stars I saw an image dimly mirrored in his eyes. I removed my gaze from his face, and looked abroad, and beheld, dark against the wan air of the dying night, Love seated upon a throne lowly and poor, and not worthy to bear him, — no longer, indeed, wounded and bleeding, but still bereft of his perfect glory; in his eyes there shone a soft light of suffering not yet past, but on his brow, where poppies were mingled with the myrtles, there lay the shadow which falls upon one not remembered; upon his parted lips hovered the half-formed smile of a child who halts between weeping and laughter; he was fully clothed in raiment of dim and sullied red and gold; in one hand he bore a poppy branch bound about the myrtle, from which the stars had fallen one by one, and in the other a golden globe whose brightness was obscured and shamed by dust; his feet were wholly hidden in the thick growth of weeds and poppies that crowded round his throne; he spoke no word, only the faint sounds in the air about him and the grief-dimmed eyes of my Soul told me that

he was Love imprisoned in an alien land of oblivion — forgotten, put away.

Again my heart sank, and the flowing of its streams waxed dull, and the words of him bound by the sea burned upon it with a more ardent flame, and the vision we passed from filled my eyes, and came forth of them in bitter tears ; yet I forgot not the saying of my Soul, that this should be as the darkly revealed sign of the joy to come, for was not Love enthroned — poorly indeed — and had not the shadow of suffering well-nigh lifted, albeit indeed its sear remained? But I called up strength, and bound it as a girdle about me, and looked upon the countenance of him beside me; and behold, upon it, despite the eyelids drooping with foregone grief, I saw the longed-for smile, and I took content upon me.

Our course now lay along an upward slope, whereon the poppies waxed scantier, and the weeds less rank ; a soft mossy grass soothed our wayworn feet, and I could see by the light of the dying stars that small golden blossoms lay in a pattern upon the sward. As we neared the brow of the hill, I knew that a yet unseen and mysterious

presence was about to be revealed to us; soft breezes bore his light to us upon their wings, and voices from the passing Night spoke to us of him; he was half-seated, half-lying, upon a height beyond which was stretched out the faintly glimmering sea; there lay upon him yet the shadow of the Night, but his face had upon it the radiance of an expected glory, the light of glad things to come; his eyes were yet soft with the balm of Sleep, but his lips were parted with desire; his breath was as that of blossoms that awake and lift up their heads and give forth their odours; his dusky limbs were drawn up as if in readiness to depart, and his great and goodly wings softly beat the air; with one hand he cast away his dim and dewy mantle from him, and with the other he put aside the poppies that had clustered thickly about him; as he turned his head to the East, the poppies fell from his hair, and the light rested upon his face; the smile it kindled made the East to glow, and Dawn spread forth his wings to meet the new-born Day. And when the Day was seated on his throne, we passed along a pleasant land that lay beneath the light of a great content;

and the radiance yet lingered on the countenance of my Soul, and the sadness that had made the curves of his mouth heavy, and had dimmed his eye, now gradually departed, and there came upon him an aspect of calm, as of one certain of a good thing shortly to befall, although he knows not fully what it may be; and when I looked upon his eyes my spirit took heart, and I girded myself and set forward with my head no more bent; and we were met by many who had been shown me in my former dreams, and who all bore the reflection of a light upon their faces.

Also I saw with great joy many whom I knew by name, and who were dear to me, and they were clad in garments of beauty, so that it joyed my eyes to behold them. And it appeared to me as though I felt beating upon my breast the warmth that came from theirs towards me; and youth was set as a crown upon their heads, and they bore branches blossoming from the breath of youth, and its divine essence coloured all the air about them; and I discerned one face in that company beloved of me beyond the rest; a northern sun had set

a ruddy sweetness upon it, and southern suns had kissed it into perfect bloom; from the depths of the grey eyes welled up and sprang forth the spirit of Love, and, most loath to depart, yet brooded upon them as the dove in early time upon the waters; a sacred light, as of the guileless dreams of childhood, looked out from them and gladdened my own, and the softness of Sleep was bound upon the head. When I looked upon the face, I felt, indeed, that my travail was well-nigh over, and as it passed from me, and was lost to me, my spirit bathed its dusty wings in the warm, glad tears that bubbled from my heart, and was refreshed. And when the throne of day was set well-nigh above our heads, and there was that in the air which moves the heart of nature, we rested ourselves beside a running stream, whose waters brought joyous sounds from afar, as it were the long-forgotten songs and gentle voices of our childhood, yet laden with a heavier and fuller harmony from a source we knew not yet; and as we journeyed on in the dawn of the evening, an awe fell upon me, as when one enters upon a new and unknown way, and all the air about

teemed with the echoes of things past and the vague intimations of things to come.

Then my Soul turned towards me and spoke these words: *Lay upon thy spirit a glad humility, and essay to strengthen thine eyes, that they may bear to behold the things which shall shortly be brought before thee to thy comfort and solace. As thou hast hitherto only seen him we seek sinking beneath the burdens that have been laid upon him by thee and by the like of thee; as thou hast seen the glory about him shattered and made dull by reason of the wounds and weakness the bitter darkness of the world has inflicted, so shalt thou now behold him gathering his natural power about him, and clothed with light; but not yet shall it be given to thee to see him in the plenitude of his glory. I will support thee. Look up.*

And now I raised my eyes and looked upon the stream, and it seemed to me as though the waters were cleft apart, and there was a hollow in their midst; and lo, the air about it appeared changed, and its pulses stood still, and the sounds I had heard borne on its wave collected themselves together and took form; and the form was of the colour of the sun-lighted

sea, and within it I saw one borne gently upward, naked, and glowing exceedingly; the stars of the living myrtles burned fresh upon his hair, and his countenance was as the supreme excellence of youth transfigured, the wound upon his heart was healed, and on its place I saw burning a ruddy flame, whereof the tongues came forth to me and touched my own, whereon were engraven the words which I heard Love speak when we saw him bound to the tree, and in their stead the flame wrought this saying, letter by letter, *Many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the floods drown it;* and now the radiant mist wherein he was lifted up rose and enfolded him, and hid his aspect from me, and its form was dispersed, and it was changed to gentle sounds in the stream, and all the air about became as it was before.

Then I turned my eyes upon my Soul and saw that he appeared well pleased, and the sparkling light sent up from the ripples of the stream whereby we sat played across his brow and illumined his dusky hair. Then I knew that I should be gladdened by what he was going to tell me. He spoke

and said, *Thou hast well seen that the travail of Love is past and gone by, and content and joy are spread over the whole air because of it. Now there will arise upon thy vision a mystery which thou wilt, of thy nature, comprehend but dimly; yet fail not to look well upon it, for by it the springs of the heart of the universe are fed and made glad; and because Love is thus gone up from the wave in thy sight, it is given to thee to look upon it.*

He ceased to speak, and I turned my gaze in the direction where I had seen the last vision; and behold, again the air seemed changed, and I saw a happy light gathering itself there, and it seemed, as it were, to be formed of the warmth which makes the earth bring forth its fruit; and there appeared to me within the light an inner living glow, and the glow divided itself in twain, and became two Holy Ones, each having six wings; their limbs moved not, but the ardour wherewith their spirits were endued bore them along. As one sees in a soft air two flower-laden branches bend one towards the other, and, mingling, send forth a two-fold fragrance, so I saw one of these impelled towards his fellow and lightly touch him, and a living

pulse seemed to beat in the flame that went forth from them, and a form was given to it, and a heart informed it, and all the fire-coloured air about it breathed hymns at this marvellous birth. Albeit, my spirit had not yet been fully purified, so that I should clearly know what this mystery showed forth; yet I was greatly rejoiced in that it was given me to see it. And now my Soul turned towards me and spoke these words, *What thou hast just beheld it is vouchsafed to no man to comprehend, save he see the glory that comes forth of the Holy Place; therefore gird up thy spirit that thou be ready for the call of him who shall lead thee thereunto. What thou hast seen it was given to the three Holy Ones to know fully when they were cast into the furnace; for as the serpent-rod which the prophet threw forth swallowed its fellows, the greater eating the lesser, so did the fiercer flames of that Charity which thou hast erewhile seen wonderfully and mystically begotten go forth of the righteous children's hearts, and devour and utterly dry up the heat that burned about them.*

He ceased to speak, and then I turned my gaze upon his eyes, and rejoiced greatly

through my spirit to see a brighter glow upon them, as from the expected coming of the long-desired; and when I cast my eyes upon the earth I discerned there many happy creatures, joyous and beautiful, and such as have no existence in the neighbourhood of evil. After a space, and when my eyes had been gladdened by reason of these things, I again turned them upon my Soul, and I knew that what we sought would now shortly be revealed to us. A weakness fell upon me, but my Soul supported me; we looked forward, and saw one approaching clothed about with a soft light; he moved towards us, gently lifted by the spirit from the ground, neither flying nor running. Ever and again his feet, wherefrom sprang glowing wings, touched the earth and caused it to bring forth flowers; his head was bound with a fillet of violet, and violet blossoms breathed upon by Love; he carried a mystic veil of saffron colour, which depended from his head upon his shoulders even to the ground, and his shining body was half girt with fawn-skin; in his hand he carried a staff, which was as the rod of the high priest, for as I looked upon it its barrenness

burst forth in almond bloom; and, as when the prophet put away his shoes from off his feet before the Holy Place, and beheld the bush burning with fire but not consumed, even so I saw upon the staff the dancing tongues of flame cling round the wood, but leave it scatheless; and this thing appeared marvellous in my eyes, and I thought upon the words my Soul had spoken to me concerning the three Holy Ones, and how the fires which wrapped them about did but make them stronger and fairer than before.

And now, looking upon the face of him who came towards us, it appeared as the face of one dwelling in the Holy Place, glowing with the perfect peace which is shed of Love, for he had borne the Very Love within his hands, therefore upon him the shadow of the burden of humanity had not rested; and now, encouraged by his gentle mien, and by the strengthened light upon the eyes of my Soul, I went forward until I set myself in front of him who bore the saffron veil; the waves of Love that moved about him laved my face, they refreshed me, and appeared to make my self-consciousness sit lightly upon me, and

to loosen me from the grip of my humanity, but it was not yet vouchsafed to me to cast it from me.

As the holy seer prayed to be purged of his transgressions by the burning coal of Charity, so I too desired that my lips should be touched, and my eyes made clear and worthy to behold those things whence flow the springs of life. When the aspect of him who bore the blossoming staff fell full upon me it generated a stronger yearning towards the Beatific Vision, and the distant harmonies of the spheres became clearer unto me; I then first felt conscious that a faint light hovered about my own head, like that upon the head of my Soul, and the voice of him who bore the mystic veil spoke to me by the spirit, and I heard these words, *Before thou art worthy to behold Him whom thou hast so long sought in the perfect fulness of His glory, thou must be purged of all grossness, thou must be clothed utterly with change of raiment, and the dead fruit of thy heart and of thy lips must be put away from thee; and when these things shall have been done, yea, even then thou shalt not see His full effulgence with none between it and thee, but through the*

veil of Sleep shall it be revealed unto thee. Follow me. Then, chastened by these words, I again bent my head, and my Soul led me forward.

Then I turned unto him and bent a look upon him as of one questioning, and, seeing my aspect, he turned towards me and spoke these words: *Wouldst thou learn who is this thus leading us on towards Him we seek; thou sawest his name upon his brow, but the lingering darkness of thy spirit forbade thee to decipher it aright; he it is whom thou hast known since first thou camest away from thy mother's breast, for with what thou receivedst therefrom, thou acceptedst him; looking upon him thou lookest upon what has ever dwelt within thy heart of hearts, for by him shall the Very Love be revealed unto thee; he has no beginning, for throughout all ages has he stood by and ministered to Him we seek and shown Him forth: it has been desired of many from the first years unto this day to put him aside and even to slay him, but, like the flame-girt, unconsumed staff he bears, he passes through the fire, and even in these latter days gives forth the light that has first been shed upon him. The violets upon his brow are those of*

young time, yet the dew is fresh upon them; and though it was believed of many that his staff was sapless and withered, behold how the air about it is made fragrant by the blossoms that it bears. Faithful is he through all; he holds on high his lamp so that those who look above the low fogs that cling about the earth may be led of it, and the flames about him penetrate the thick darkness of the waking world. Many have sought to tear the wings from off his feet that they may not see the light that springs forth from them; yet still the radiance of Him whom he shows forth makes his feet shed light abroad, and still the earth yields flowers at his approach. Let us follow him.

He who bore the flame-girt staff floated lightly along his path of flowers, and the glow about his winged feet made their petals to expand. And now in all humility I stood upon the threshold of a glowing temple; the air about it was moved by the breath of Him who dwelt within, its waves were heavy with the odours that came forth of His presence, and its pulses echoed with the voices of the worlds that revolve because of Him. Within the court of the temple I heard the sound of wings that

ceased not to beat the air; then a tremor came upon my hands and feet, for remembrance brought to me the image of him we saw by the grey sea, bound hand and foot, and the voice from his heart sounded yet in my ears. Then one came unto me, having six wings, which overshadowed my Soul and me, and, though I looked not upon his face, I knew he touched my forehead and lips with it, and they were purified by fire, but not seared with its sting. Then his fellow came unto me, and put away my traveller's garb from off me, and clothed me with a vestment in colour like the heart of an opal, and over my left shoulder he laid a stole tinted like a flame seen through water, and he placed upon my head a veil which covered my eyes, but did not dim my spiritual vision; and now again the words which came from Love's mouth, when I saw him bound by the sea, rang in my ears, *Thou hast wounded my heart*, and a deeper humility fell upon me. Then I heard him of the winged feet say unto my Soul, *He is prepared, come;* and I was borne along by the spirit through the outer court and toward the Holy Place, and ever the rushing sound

of the wings became louder and louder, and I knew that the temple was filled with seraphim, for the veil which hung over my eyes but shielded them from a light which, when it should fall upon them, would blind them; also I knew that he whose head was bound with violets had left us, and consigned me to the care of my Soul.

Now there arose before me the image of him whom we had seen sleeping in the ruined temple; his arms were wound about his head, which lay back upon them; he was naked, but his form was wrapped about with the soft star-lighted air; his lashes were no longer moist with tears, but his face shone as became one through whom the Very Love was to be revealed. And now I felt the heart of the universe beat, and its inner voices were made manifest unto me, the knowledge of the coming presence of the Very Love informed the air, and its waves echoed with the full voices of the revolving spheres. Then my Soul spoke to me and said, *In the beginning of time the universe and all that was therein was grey, and its springs were without life, as a fair body, joyless and lacking beauty,*

because no spirit stirs it; light had not come upon it; and, as when one is in a trance, the pulses are dead, and await the aid of that which shall enter them and make the dead alive; even so, there sprang forth, of its own power and holy ardour, a light over the face of all things, and the heat of it made them glow, and the grey became green: the golden air sang over all, and an universal hymn arose and went up, and its voice yet gladdens the circling worlds. As the prophet saw in the dark valley the dead bones come together and take life upon them, even so Love, who was the light, smiled upon the uninformed countenance of things, and it was kindled because of it; and there went from him a two-fold essence, whereof the streams have flowed for ever, and cease not to flow; and by them are we upheld, and our spirits replenished; and, as the priest holds the flower-starred crown over the heads of the bridegroom and the bride, so now and again do the streams unite within us, and Love, whence they go forth, is the crown over us and the light about us. But through the thick veil of the darkness of the world this is not seen or known of men, but only through the spirit may it be made clear unto us; and

the spirit soars aloft rejoicing, and is girt about with delight because of it.

And now the image of Sleep filled the orbit of my sight, and through the veil of his form I saw him who bore the mystic saffron-raiment wherewith he had covered his hands. My spirit well-nigh fainting, I turned unto my Soul, and knew by the increasing glow upon him that strength was given me yet again to lift my eyes. Well was it for me that what came was revealed to me through the veil of Sleep, else I could not have borne to look upon it.

From out the uplifted hands of him who stood within the Holy Place there sprang forth a radiance of a degree so dazzling that what else of glory there was within the temple was utterly obscured; as one seeing a thin black vapour resting before the face of the mid-day sun, so I saw upon the radiance the brooding cherubim, their wings meeting, their faces hidden; I saw within the glory, one who seemed of pure snow and of pure fire, the Very Love, the Divine Type of Absolute Beauty, primæval and eternal, compact of the white flame of youth, burning in ineffable perfection.

For a moment's space I shielded my eyes from the blinding glow, then once more raised them upon the Beatific Vision. It seemed to me as though my spirit were drawn forth from its abiding place, and dissolved in unspeakable ardours; anon fiercely whirled round in a sphere of fire, and swiftly borne along a sea of throbbing light into the Very Heart. Ah, how may words shew forth what it was then vouchsafed to me to know? As when the thin, warm tears upon the cheek of the sleeping bride are kissed away by him who knows that she is wholly his, and one with him; as softly as his trembling lips are set upon the face transfigured on his soul, even so fell upon my heart, made one with the Heart of Love, its inmost, secret flame: my spirit was wholly swallowed up, and I knew no more.

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Then all this wondrous vision was fulfilled, and looking upon the sky, I saw that the stars had set and the dawn had spread his wings over the world; and again the words of the sage King, *Until the day break and the shadows flee away*, came into my mind.

REVIEW.

A VISION OF LOVE REVEALED IN SLEEP.

By Simeon Solomon, F. S. Ellis, 1871.

WE have every reason to congratulate ourselves when the genius of a distinguished artist finds a double channel for its self-expression — when a poet can furnish us with illustrations of his poems copied from the very visions which inspired them, or when a painter is able to tell us in words what he means to convey to our imaginations by the forms and colours of his pictures. Mr. Solomon's prose poem is a key to the meaning of his drawings. It lays bare the hidden purpose of the artist, and enables us to connect picture with picture in a perfectly intelligible series. Those who are familiar with his sketches or with the photographs which have been taken from them will recognise the perfect unity of style which marks the vision and the outlined forms. Those again who can appreciate the delicate and subtle key of colour used by the painter in his finished pictures will trace the same harmonies of hue in

many of the descriptions of the vision, for instance in the vestments tinted "like the heart of an opal" and "like a flame seen through water" of the final scene.

As its name implies, this prose poem has for its subject Love. The mystery of Love is here displayed as in a pageant to the dreaming spirit of the poet by his soul conceived as an external and superior power. It is not therefore without good reason that the single illustration with which the book is adorned should represent the Soul and the Novice: in the same way, if a medieval artist had designed one woodcut for the *Divine Comedy*, he would probably have drawn Dante with Virgil or with Beatrice as his initiator in the mysteries of the spiritual world.

The Love of Mr. Solomon's *Vision* is quite distinct and unconventional. He is unlike the "bitter sweet impracticable wild beast" who bent Sappho's soul as "storms break oaks upon the mountains." He is unlike the blacksmith of Anacreon's Mythus, who forged the soul upon an anvil and then plunged it in a wintry stream. Nor again has he anything in common with the beauti-

ful winged boy of Praxiteles, or with the runaway of Moschus. The parrot-winged fire-faced child of Arabian fancy belongs to another race and lineage. So does that champion of chivalrous love beheld in vision by Pierre Vidal, who rode a snow-white horse and had the face and limbs of a young knight, followed by the damsels Modesty and Mercy, and by Loyalty for squire. Nor, again, is the Love of this new Mythus to be found upon the pages of the *Vita Nuova*. The pilgrim who met Dante on the Way of Sighs, the grave-faced and inexorable youth who sat by his bed-side and wept, and communed with him, and was sweet and stern, has more perhaps in common with the Love of Mr. Solomon's *Vision* than any other. But he is not the same. In truth, the originality of any poetical or pictorial Mythus, such as is embodied in this vision and in the series of Mr. Solomon's drawings, consists in its creator having viewed an old problem with new eyes, and communicated to the object some of the qualities of his own soul and of the age in which he lives. This, in our opinion, Mr. Solomon has done with eminent and unmistakable distinctness.

His Love is not classical, not medieval, not Oriental; but it has a touch of all these qualities — the pure perfection of the classic form, the allegorical mysticism and pensive grace of the middle age, and the indescribable perfume of Orientalism, which, by the way, finds a more than usually definite expression in the last scene of this vision. Added to these general qualities we trace in this spirit of love a vague yet intense yearning, a *Sehnsucht*, which belongs to music and is essentially modern. If, finally, we seek that characteristic which is most truly peculiar to the poet himself, we find it to be a certain Biblical solemnity of spiritual sense inbreathed, as Milton phrases it, into the forms of art.

It savours somewhat of Philistinism to question the details of a vision and to expect an exact meaning in all the figures of so pictorial a work of imagination as this of Mr. Solomon's. Yet we may call attention to the subtlety by which he has divided the soul of the seer from the man himself, and has made that soul with purged and disembodied vision act as the hierophant of a revelation which the man in his com-

pleteness would have been incapable of discerning. Other poets have chosen some guide, like the Sibyl of Virgil or the Beatrice of Dante or the Angel of the Apocalypse, for their illuminator. Mr. Solomon has proved the modern quality of his genius by the selection of no other power than that of the indwelling soul of man. The first words of the soul upon the pathway of initiation are : —

"Thou hast looked upon me, and thou knowest me well, for in me thou but seest thyself, not hidden and obscured by the cruel veil of the flesh. I am come forth of thee for thy well-doing."

After this preface the soul leads forth the seer to a place where Memory abides ; then showing him simple Pleasure in the figure of a woman :

"Looking upon her, I saw that she was good, but I knew that there was that about her that left me not content ; she was like as sweet notes heard once and lost for ever."

Then they come to the station of Love bruised and bound ; where also Passion is revealed as " she who had wounded and had

sought to slay Love, but who, in her turn, was grievously wounded and tormented in strange, self-devised ways." Passing from this place, they reach "him who had done battle with Love, Death, who would love us did he dare, whom we would love did we dare." Parenthetically it may be said that one of the most beautiful and subtly finished portions of this *Vision* is that in which Death is described. Divine Charity bringing Sleep to earth, Time holding stricken Love within his arms, and Night and Dawn and Day, and the Spirit of Dreams in sleep, are all seen in the successions of the mystery. Till at length, after a space of time and after due lustrations and equipment in the robes of purity, insight is granted to the seer into the holiest of Holies, where Love himself, no longer afflicted and dethroned, but in his glory and his power, is displayed. Thus lightly and vaguely to indicate a few scenes of the *Vision* is all that a critic can attempt. To read the inner meaning of the mystery — to decide whether Love wounded by Passion upon earth, abandoned to oblivion, put out of sight and overgrown by weeds and briars of this mortal life, is

revealed in his full splendour at the gates of Death, or Death's twin-brother Sleep — must be left to the judgment of the readers of the pages of this book.

It is enough once more to point out the subtle harmony which subsists between the poetic and the pictorial faculties of the artist's genius. Those who desire a comment on the figured allegories of Mr. Solomon will find it in his *Vision;* those who wish to see his vision as he saw it with their very eyes have only to turn to his drawings for full and ample illustration. The frontispiece of the book is itself a good example of the painter's style, at the same time that it sets forth the relation he desires to establish between the seer and the soul.

If any definite criticism should be added to this account of Mr. Solomon's *Vision*, it must be that there is a certain vagueness in the succession of the scenes, and that his literary style, while it shares the delicacy and peculiar flavour of his pictures, has somewhat also of their profuse perfume and languor. To lay stress on these points would be ungrateful. We should rather be thankful that such an artist as Mr. Solomon

has found a voice so clear and sweet as that which may be listened to in this narration of his Apocalypse of Love.

J. A. SYMONDS.

The Bibelot

"Much beauty had this boy to leave on earth:
Grieve not, for he did leave it, hurrying hence
To some more radiant art, some starred rebirth
Where Truth most needed his soul's eloquence,
And where he toils those stately minds among
Who dare glance backward smiling, and with song."

So wrote of the English painter Boningtton, who died young a century ago, the American poet who was to die young in August of last summer. And none who knew Arthur Upson will doubt that it was with smiles and singing that his spirit went out among the spheres. Earth entertains such bright strangers now and then, whose home is elsewhere. They linger here on their high errand; but when it is done, their parting seems rather a return into their own country.

This is not a place, perhaps, to speak of Arthur Upson's personality,—yet his written words, which set to fitting music feeling both deep and rare, and will win some readers into instant lovers, can bespeak their own praise. He had the secret of immediate human contact, and graced every life he touched. Tenderness and tears were his, and sweetness, gayety, and loving

kindness. There was a kind of poignancy about him for those that loved him, as if they felt he was to leave them too soon. His vision transmuted every part of life into poetry; every mood compelled its song; and to behold the world in his company was to perceive that nothing is unclean.

He lived for Beauty; and when, after thirty-one years of such living, "his good hour came," Beauty had a mind to him. That hour found him as he had wished, alone and in silence; "and only these staid watchers by" — the sunset and the early stars — to see the waters of a pine-bound northern lake receive and fold him in. He carried with him the just-finished manuscript of his last work, a poem-drama of mediæval Brittany, a thing rich with dreams and moonlight, and, as he said of it himself, "full of love and fighting". . . . . Had he taken it to read over by the fading evening light? Did it blow out of his hands and overboard from his little boat, and was he trying to recover it? . . . It is not known. But the mood in which the great moment overtook him, is recorded in the verses of which a water-stained copy came ashore in the empty boat. They are printed in the following group, under the title, "Fairy Spoils."

R. S. P.

LYRICS AND SONNETS
By
ARTHUR UPSON.

HIS LOVERS TO ARTHUR UPSON

We see thee in the clear aspiring flame
On Autumn hearths: the moon and each white star
Restore us thy deep, love-wise smile: afar
About the world red roses breathe thy fame
In many gardens: old rich words proclaim
Thee: music sings thee in each magic bar:
And all the rare and lovely things that are
Bloom newly now to celebrate thy name.

And so this world is fairer than before,
With thee in sunset cloud and the blue day.
Thou needest not — O Perfect! — longer stay,
But oh, without thee! how to win thy lore?
. . . Yet even Death, for thee, hath shed despair,
Dark Death is beautiful now thou art there!

(THE MINNESOTA MAGAZINE.)

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AFTER A DOLMETSCH CONCERT.

Out of the conquered Past
  Unravishable Beauty;
Hearts that are dew and dust
  Rebuking the dream of Death;
Flower o' the clay down-cast
  Triumphant in Earth's aroma;
Strings that were strained in rust
  A-tremble with Music's breath!

Wine that was spilt in haste
  Arising in fumes more precious;
Garlands that fell forgot
  Rooting to wondrous bloom;
Youth that would flow to waste
  Pausing in pool-green valleys—
And Passion that lasted not
  Surviving the voiceless Tomb!

THE EARTH-ERRAND.

THIS memory-laden star that winds
  Through space her wistful ways,
Searching for that she yet not finds
  In all her yesterdays —
She is a troubled thought whose quest,
  Gone forth among the spheres,
Shall never know delight nor rest,
  Nor respite from her fears,
But still veer on through void and flame,
  And still expectant yearn,
Till, with her prize, to whence she came
  She doth at length return.

The sun that lends her living light
  To tell her gilded years,
The moon that lanterns her at night
  To search among the spheres,
The starry hosts that wheel about
  And watch her mazes wind,
Serve humbly with nor dread nor doubt
  That she one day will find —
That she one day will find the prize
  They sent her forth to earn,
And with it through the waiting skies
  Triumphantly return!

"VERS LA VIE."

(THE STATUE BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU IN THE PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTS, BRUSSELS.)

ANGEL, hast thou betrayed me? Long ago
In the Forgotten Land of souls that wait,
Thou leddest me to the outward-folding gate,
Bidding me live. I leaned into the flow
Of earthward-rushing spirits, fain to know
What are humanity and human fate
Of which the rumor reached to where we sate
In our cool, hidden, dreamless ante-glow.
But I learn not, and am bewildered here
To know why thou with seeming-kindly hands
Didst let me forth, explorer of a star
Where all is strange, and very often Fear
Urges retreat to that Forgotten Land's
Unthoughtful shores where thou and Silence are!

MY SONG MUST NOT FORSAKE ME.

NOT mine from thee, loved heart, to feel such tide
As this mine own doth pour thee;
Still shall I not go all unsatisfied:
Enough that I adore thee.

And if thou never wakest to my song
Not weakly shall it falter;
Proudly I pace Love's lonely courts along
Unto their inmost altar.

Ah, some day, if, within thy pleasant sleep
Faint echoes of me find thee,
White heart, may dreams be not too fair or deep
Or soothing to unbind thee!

Perchance even then, responding to that sound,
Thou'lt hail and overtake me,
Clearing the idle distance at a bound. . . . .
My song must not forsake me!

THE LAKE.

WHEN in our drifting boat
The early lights salute you
Bending to trail your arm
Where yellow lilies rise,
Lifting your full, white throat
To free its morning music —
Then do I dread the charm
Of your deep and changeful eyes!

When, at the night's young hour,
The first fair planet rises
Shaking her petals' gold
Afar in the fields of air;
When to that flaming flower,
Lonely, the dim lake answers —
Then how my heart grows bold,
Wishing that you were there!

A MOTIVE OUT OF LOHENGRIN.

UNEARTHLY beauty of soft light persuadeth
This castle, which to shadows did belong;
And through its farthest vaults sweet, mellow song
The silence of my wintry halls upbraideth;
Gently as saffron dawn that smiling fadeth
The sable, yielding hours, these search along;
And with them souls of roses dead — faint throng
Of odors of old years that all-pervadeth.
Lady, this thing I speak not — do not fear it.
'Twere more than friendship, yet no better name
Dares my most grateful heart's allegiance claim
Lest this, as I do think, be brother-spirit
To him, swan-brought to Brabant's castled shore,
Who, named aloud, was lost forevermore.

THE TRAGIC WINDS.

I LAY in a rich chamber candle-dim
And nightlong dreamt awake. The ancient winds
Like remote music made a dusk of sound:

Viols throbbing out some earth-impassioned hymn
From halls of regal revels and bright sins—
Far voices as of love-mad women, crowned,

Star-gemmed Despairs, the queens of legend lands,
Seated within the gateways of their towers,
Eyes full of smiles forgotten, unfelt tears

Uncounted falling in their idle hands
Which whitely drooped upon their laps like flowers.
Anteia's sisters these, and Phedra's feres.

Methought their murmurs gathered in the night,
And all these wretched queens of ancient care
Joined faintly their involuntary moan,

Till pale Aurora passioned toward the light,
Slight Cynthia fled adown her brightening stair,
And day brought other worlds to rule my own.

THE MYSTERY OF BEAUTY.

I.

For whom is Beauty? Where no eyes attend
As richly goes the day; and every dawn
Reddens along green rivers whereupon
None ever gaze. Think, could earth see an end
Of all the twilight lovers whose thoughts blend
With scent of garden blooms they call their own,
Would not as close the yellowest rose outblown
Be, after them, the unmurmurous evening's friend?
Then wherefore Beauty, if in mortal eye
That loves them stars no challenge read to shine,
And all the wonder of a sunset sky
Wax not more wondrous for such smile as thine?
Why, pray, if not for Love which cannot die —
This old earth-loving Love of thine and mine?

II.

When we two from our Summer hills have passed,
And Autumn burns beneath thy praise no more,
Nor any Winter's raving at our door
Shuts one within the other's heart more fast;
Neither Spring's roses learn what lips thou hast —
Oh, then this thing called Beauty to its core
Our wedded souls shall penetrate before
One thought unto Eternity is cast!

Then shall we know the violet's pretext; learn
More definite a promise of the rose,
And its fulfilment; when the maples turn,
Be part of all the glory among those;
Or help the May with her uncoiling fern,
And breathe the trillium open where it grows!

SONG OF AGAMEDE.

(FROM "THE CITY.")

GROW, grow, thou little tree,
His body at the roots of thee;
Since last year's loveliness in death
The living beauty nourisheth.

Bloom, bloom, thou little tree,
Thy roots around the heart of me;
Thou canst not blow too white and fair
From all the sweetness hidden there.

Die, die, thou little tree,
And be as all sweet things must be;
Deep where thy petals drift I, too,
Would rest the changing seasons through.

ARLINGTON.

No tap of drum nor sound of any horn
Shall call them now from this unbattled height;
No more the picket dreads the traitor night,
Nor would the marcher tired delay the morn.
Fell some upon the field with victory torn
From weakening grasp; and some before the fight,
Doomed by slow fevers or the stray shot's spite;
And some, old wounds through quiet years have worn.
And all are folded now so peacefully
Within her breast whose glory was their dream —
From her own sanguine fields, from isles extreme,
From the long tumult of the land and sea —
Where lies the steel Potomac's jewelled stream
Like the surrendered sword of Memory.

SEVEN OCTAVES FROM AN OXFORD GARDEN.

I.

WADHAM.

THE day was like a sabbath in a swoon,
Slow on September's blue strayed fair cloud-things
That poised aslant upon their charmed wings,
Arrested by some backward thought of June.
Softly I trod, and with repentant shoon,
Half fearfully in sweet imaginings,
Where lay, like courtyards of departed kings,
The old quadrangle, paved with afternoon.

II.

As one whose road winds upward turns his face
Unto the valleys where he late hath stood,
Leaning upon his staff in peace to brood
On many a beauty of the distant place,
So I in this cool garden pause a space,
Reviewing many things in many a mood,
Accumulating friends in solitude
From the assembly of my thoughts and days.

III.

CONSTANCY.

IT is the same sky over sea and land:
The same pure stars attend great London town
That tremble where the Channel thunders down;
'Tis we that vary, running on the strand.
Life bounds no fresher from the eternal hand
Here in the Wadham branches than out yon
Where blurs the dusty highway wide and wan:
Good is within all, having all things planned.

IV.

VICISSITUDE.

STRANGE, that a sod for just a thrill or two
Should ever be seduced into the round
Of change wherein its present state is found
In this my form! forsake its quiet, true
And fruitfullest retirement to go through
The heat, the strain, the languor and the wound!
Forget soft rain to hear the stormier sound,
Exchange for burning tears that peaceful dew!

V.

LOST INHERITANCE.

THIS is my lost inheritance. I look
With brotherliest affections yearning forth
To the flower-bearing sod: Oh, what is worth
The strange estate of flesh I strangely took?
In the soft soil the garden breezes shook
From the wall chink but now, there's measure of earth
To match my body's dust when its rebirth
To sod restores old functions I forsook.

VI.

ROMAN GLASSWARE PRESERVED IN THE ASHMOLEAN.

FAIR crystal cups are dug from earth's old crust,
Shattered but lovely; for, at price of all
Their shameful exile from the banquet-hall,
They have been bargaining beauties from the dust.
So, dig my life but deep enough, you must
Find broken friendships round its inner wall —
Which once my careless hand let slip and fall —
Brave with faint memories, rich in rainbow-rust.

VII.

"HE IS NO LOVER OF THE SEA WHO LOSES."

He is no lover of the sea who loses
  Sound of her voices, inland wandering.
  Still should her old, melodious mystery spring
Around him, wend he whereso'er he chooses;
And so within me rhythmic life refuses
  By any other pulse than yours to swing,
  Far from your friendship's ocean though I sing
Where the hills tire, and the rough pathway bruises.

THOUGHT OF STEVENSON.

HIGH and alone I stood on Calton Hill
Above the scene that was so dear to him
Whose exile dreams of it made exile dim.
October wooed the folded valleys till
In mist they blurred, even as our eyes upfill
Under a too-sweet memory; spires did swim,
And gables rust-red, on the grey sea's brim —
But on these heights the air was soft and still.
Yet not all still: an alien breeze will turn
Here, as from bournes in aromatic seas,
As round old shrines a new-freed soul might yearn
With incense of rich earthly reveries.
Vanish the isles: Mist, exile, searching pain,
But the brave soul is free, is home again!

MINSTRELS IN BLOOMSBURY.

To Covent Garden people stream
To drink the music there;
Upon the curb we stay to dream
With melody more rare:
Sing on, enchanted minstrel-girl,
Thou artless, young, and fair!

The 'busses in Southampton Row,
The jingling hansoms here,
Bear London, heedless, to and fro
In search of evening cheer:
For us thou art enough, dear voice
Forgetful-sweet and clear!

Our daylong toil but goes to win
Another toilsome day;
Play on, oblivious violin!
Soft harp, beseech thee, play!
And thou, pale girl with eyes aflame,
Sing on for us who stay!

AFTER READING "THE GOLDEN TREASURY" IN THE GREEN PARK.

OFF Piccadilly with its pavement cries,
Its maddening monotone of wheel and hoof,
In the Green Park primeval Summer lies,
How near, how yearning, yet how far aloof!
O city, symbol of a world that still
Heedless of beauty under heaven rolls;
And thou, blithe meadow all with larks athrill
Like Poetry, that pasture of great souls —
Ye twain, so sundered, shall forever dwell,
A tumult and a blessing side by side:
Here, as to toil-worn Argo once befell
A singing island on a thundering tide,
Where men might stretch them out in glad release,
We too, much-wandering, hail this hour of peace!

ON THE LOWER RHINE.

(DÜSSELDORF, HEINE'S BIRTHPLACE.)

By Düsseldorf the singing Rhine-Stream bends,
Age-wonted from his earlier lyric tone:
A master-singer somewhat pensive grown,
In more of epic stateliness he wends
Where Youth, in memory only, still attends
With foregone passions, raptures long since flown;
So sweeps he down from Minster-crowned Cologne,
And to the silent, level sea descends.
Not such, O Heine, thy mad stream of song!
Though now beyond our fitful ocean's hem
The eternal tide of beauty harbor thee,
Thou fleddest the broken crags of life along,
Beating white flowers of foam out over them,
And passionately soughtest thy mother-sea!

SOUVENANCE DE LIÈGE.

(NOVEMBER.)

GREY city by the silver Meuse, I fling
One precious day to thee of my brief days;
Take it, and give remembrance: Mellow praise
Of chimes across a moonlight evening,
Rain of light echoes; the full, wavy swing
Of burdened barges down thy waterways —
Noise nearest music; the blue, holy haze
And perfume of old altars; wing on wing
Of iridescent doves descending soft
Within a Gothic gate where one strews bread
For alms to the air's beggars; beyond her,
Arcades recessive, pinnacles aloft,
November's vista deepening to one blur
Of blue-and-grey behind her upturned head.

AFTER READING "AN ITALIAN GARDEN."

To him no more an inward hate
  Shall speak, nor aught but beauty sing,
Who walks within this Garden late
  And hears the fountain murmuring.

A vestige of some other day
  Once lived, but dim-remembered now,
Goes in the moon's familiar way
  Beneath the stately ilex-bough.

The parterre — I but half forget —
  The Tuscan melancholy night —
Too faintly I regain them, yet
  Too keenly to have lost them quite.

Was I the Other of some song
  That many a year hath left the lips
Of her who walks alone along
  The water where the Triton dips?

And she — how her rispetti claim
  The sad, bewildered heart of me
That ever almost-saith her name,
  Yet loseth it continually!

Slow moving down the marble stair,
  Or leaned on sculptured balustrade,
Her face is shadowed by her hair,
  Her arms are buried in its shade.

Oh, would she lift that face, or free
  Those hidden hands, I know that soon
My faint, old faded Italy
  Again might blossom to the moon!

SPRINGTIDE OF THE SOUL.

THE flesh to fragrant whitening of the bough,
Full-flooding fields, and softening sod, doth yearn
The spirit will to Autumn's wooing burn,
And to October is her tenderest vow:
October, Springtide of the soul! What now
May I compare to raptures that return
When round thine auburn hair these eyes discern
First the wild, purple berries kiss thy brow?

My soul bends to thee, as a waiting bride,
Long from her maiden chamber searching far,
Doth see, at last, beneath the vesper star,
Her sunset lover toward her castle ride:
She flings her evening casement open wide,
And leans out through the trembling lattice-bar,
Then, turning, sets her chamber door ajar,
And flies back to the crimsoning window side.

"Submit thyself to Beauty," cry the lords
Of this Autumnal pageant: day-end skies
That dwell in calm, like love-remembered eyes —
And the dim dusk of topaz-golden hoards
Streaking the forest like old painted words
Fading along some saint's-page fair and wise —
And windy rivers whose mingled voices rise
To smite rich, vibrant, melancholy chords.

. . . . . .

Friend of my heart! Among the Autumn trees
We walk together baring thought to thought
Of this vast symbol-earth wherein lie wrought
Hints of immortal dreams and destinies!
And you and I are part of all of these!
Ourselves mysterious emblems, tones half-caught
From voices far, wherein our souls have sought
Deep meanings, silent, 'mid earth's melodies.

"EX LIBRIS."

In an old book at even as I read
Fast fading words adown my shadowy page,
I crossed a tale of how, in other age,
At Arqua, with his books around him, sped
The word to Petrarch; and with noble head
Bowed gently o'er his volume that sweet sage
To Silence paid his willing seigniorage.
And they who found him whispered, "He is dead!"

Thus timely from old comradeships would I
To Silence also rise. Let there be night,
Stillness, and only these staid watchers by,
And no light shine save my low study light —
Lest of his kind intent some human cry
Interpret not the Messenger aright.

WHEN ROSELEAVES FALL.

WHEN roseleaves fall in evenings cold
To mingle with their mother mold,
Look to it lest thy heart be set
To seek strange blossoms and forget
Thy roses and their sway of old!

Run not to lesser blooms! nor fold
Unto thy heart the creed those hold
Who stand like Stoics by and let
Their roseleaves fall!

But gather them as precious gold;
Rich-spiced, high-placed and orient-bowled,
They shall be Summer to thee yet.
What though they fade and thou regret,
Thou canst make theirs a boon untold
When roseleaves fall.

FAIRY SPOILS.

HUGE lumber mills across the lake
  Glitter with lights — the night-shift 's on.
Toilers for me strange beauty make
  Betwixt these twilights wan.

Grey sky above, grey lake below —
  Even the West to-night is grey.
But there the great mill windows glow
  And make the dull night gay.

Oh, if I may not share your toils,
  Ye men whose patient strength is gold,
From lands of dream some fairy spoils
  I'd bring your hearts to hold.

WHEN THE SONG IS DONE.

WHEN the song is done
And his heart is ashes,
Never praise the Singer
Whom you, silent, heard.
What to him the sound?
What your eyes' fond flashes?
When the singing 's over
Say no word!

Ye who darkling stood,
Think, your noon of praises,
Can it glimmer down
To his deepset bower?
Never round him shone
Once your garden-mazes;
Now his wandering 's over
Bring no flower!

The Bibelot

IT *is in evidence that Lafcadio Hearn about 1886, or perhaps earlier, proposed among other of his innumerable literary adventures, a translation of the* Petits Poëmes en Prose. *It is also true that neither publisher nor public could be found for such lapidarian work. Moreover at the present hour so far as the bulk of Baudelaire's verse is concerned the few things discoverable in English are of an almost pitiably negligible quality. Twelve years ago it was still possible to write and print an alleged History of French Literature for English readers wherein the name of the French poet is omitted from footnote consideration even.*[1] *So runs the Anglo-Saxon world away from all Flowers of Evil!*

But — where shall *one look for that chosen spirit with the divine gift of rendering into English "those metallic, free sonnets, which have the resistance of bronze,*

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[1] *Even so Swinburne's* Ave atque Vale *had already become one of the fixed stars of elegiac song and English essayists were not wholly lacking who knew Baudelaire for what he was and will evermore remain. See, for example,* Miscellaneous Essays *by* George Saintsbury, (*London, 1892*) *pp. 216–252.*

and of the despairing music that flames from the mouths of lost souls trembling on the wharves of hell?" Where, indeed![2]

Fortunately, if we cannot look for an immediate and adequate version of Les Fleurs du Mal, *some few of "those polished intaglios called Poems in Prose" have been made over to us,*[3] *and, conceivably, may serve to set their author in a light less appalling than the more widely celebrated volume of his verse. If any one who thinks of Baudelaire solely as a professed Satanist will take time to revise his intellectual insularity let him read* The Eyes of the Poor. *Out of the Past something speaks to the soul and its words are from the Moon poem which Andrew Lang turned from exquisitely modulated prose into an exquisite rhythmical movement of his own. "The Moon came down the shining stair," — so it opens; and like "that music vague and old" heard by*

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2 *See* The Baudelaire Legend *by James Huneker (Scribner's Magazine for February, 1909).*

3 *In 1890 four of the twelve poems translated by Arthur Symons had been done into English by Stuart Merrill in* Pastels in Prose, *(Harper & Bros., New York,) along with many other delicate imaginings. They should be read in connexion with* French Portraits by Vance Thompson, *(Boston, 1900). See also* The Bibelot *Vol. x pp. 165–168, (Foreword).*

Gérard de Nerval, a shimmering sound begins as of moonlight made vocable, and what it says to us it said long years ago:

"Thou shalt love all things strange and sweet,
That know me and are known of me;
The lover thou shalt never meet,
The land where thou shalt never be!"

It was an expressed desire of Arthur Symons that I should publish his twelve selections from Baudelaire and O how I wish I had done so at a time when time there was to have pleased him! It is only one more instance of the dark Providence ruling our lives that this man who seemed likeliest of all his generation to succeed in whatever task of love he laid upon himself should never complete what was thus begun:—that "for him there is no longer any future." And yet while the conscious world existed for him his life was *bright—and in our hearts "he cannot cease to be!"*

T. B. M.

FOR MAY:

THE FIRE OF PROMETHEUS
BY HENRY W. NEVINSON.

POEMS IN PROSE
from
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

THE "Petits Poëmes en Prose" are experiments, and they are also confessions. "Who of us," says Baudelaire in his dedicatory preface, "has not dreamed, in moments of ambition, of the miracle of a poetic prose, musical without rhythm and without rhyme, subtle and staccato enough to follow the lyric motions of the soul, the wavering outlines of meditation, the sudden starts of the conscience?" This miracle he has achieved in these *bagatelles laborieuses*, to use his own words, these astonishing trifles, in which the art is not more novel, precise and perfect than the quality of thought and of emotion. In translating into English a few of these little masterpieces, which have given me so much delight for so many years, I have tried to be absolutely faithful to the sense, the words, and the rhythm of the original.

A. S.

POEMS IN PROSE FROM CHARLES BAUDELAIRE. TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR SYMONS. LONDON, (ELKIN MATHEWS) 1905. Sq. 16mo. Wrappers. The Vigo Cabinet Series No. 29.

I.

THE FAVOURS OF THE MOON.

THE Moon, who is caprice itself, looked in through the window when you lay asleep in your cradle, and said inwardly: "This is a child after my own soul."

And she came softly down the staircase of the clouds, and passed noiselessly through the window-pane. Then she laid herself upon you with the supple tenderness of a mother, and she left her colours upon your face. That is why your eyes are green and your cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was when you looked at her, that your pupils widened so strangely; and she clasped her arms so tenderly about your throat that ever since you have had the longing for tears.

Nevertheless, in the flood of her joy, the Moon filled the room like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all this living light thought and said: "My kiss shall be upon you for ever. You shall be beautiful as I am beautiful. You shall love that which I love and that by which I am loved: water and clouds, night and silence;

the vast green sea; the formless and multiform water; the place where you shall never be; the lover whom you shall never know; unnatural flowers; odours which make men drunk; the cats that languish upon pianos and sob like women, with hoarse sweet voices!

"And you shall be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. You shall be the queen of men who have green eyes, and whose throats I have clasped by night in my caresses; of those that love the sea, the vast tumultuous green sea, formless and multiform water, the place where they are not, the woman whom they know not, the ominous flowers that are like the censers of an unknown rite, the odours that trouble the will, and the savage and voluptuous beasts that are the emblems of their folly."

And that is why, accursed dear spoilt child, I lie now at your feet, seeking to find in you the image of the fearful goddess, the fateful godmother, the poisonous nurse of all the moonstruck of the world.

II.

WHICH IS TRUE?

I KNEW one Benedicta who filled earth and air with the ideal; and from whose eyes men learnt the desire of greatness, of beauty, of glory, and of all whereby we believe in immortality.

But this miraculous child was too beautiful to live long; and she died only a few days after I had come to know her, and I buried her with my own hands, one day when Spring shook out her censer in the graveyards. I buried her with my own hands, shut down into a coffin of wood, perfumed and incorruptible like Indian caskets.

And as I still gazed at the place where I had laid away my treasure, I saw all at once a little person singularly like the deceased, who trampled on the fresh soil with a strange and hysterical violence, and said, shrieking with laughter: "Look at me! I am the real Benedicta! a pretty sort of baggage I am! And to punish you for your blindness and folly you shall love me just as I am!"

But I was furious, and I answered: "No! no! no!" And to add more emphasis to my refusal I stamped on the ground so violently with my foot that my leg sank up to the knee in the earth of the new grave; and now, like a wolf caught in a trap, I remain fastened, perhaps for ever, to the grave of the ideal.

III.

"L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE."

THERE is a wonderful country, a country of Cockaigne, they say, which I dreamed of visiting with an old friend. It is a strange country, lost in the mists of our North, and one might call it the East of the West, the China of Europe, so freely does a warm and capricious fancy flourish there, and so patiently and persistently has that fancy illustrated it with a learned and delicate vegetation.

A real country of Cockaigne, where everything is beautiful, rich, quiet, honest; where order is the likeness and the mirror of luxury; where life is fat, and sweet to breathe; where disorder, tumult, and the unexpected are shut out; where happiness is wedded to silence; where even cooking is poetic, rich and highly flavoured at once; where all, dear love, is made in your image.

You know that feverish sickness which comes over us in our cold miseries, that nostalgia of unknown lands, that anguish of curiosity? There is a country made in your image, where all is beautiful, rich, quiet and

honest; where fancy has built and decorated a western China, where life is sweet to breathe, where happiness is wedded to silence. It is there that we should live, it is there that we should die!

Yes, it is there that we should breathe, dream, and lengthen out the hours by the infinity of sensations. A musician has written an "Invitation à la Valse:" who will compose the "Invitation au Voyage" that we can offer to the beloved, to the chosen sister?

Yes, it is in this atmosphere that it would be good to live; far off, where slower hours contain more thoughts, where clocks strike happiness with a deeper and more significant solemnity.

On shining panels, or on gilded leather of a dark richness, slumbers the discreet life of pictures, deep, calm, and devout as the souls of the painters who created it. The sunsets which colour so richly the walls of dining-room and drawing-room, are sifted through beautiful hangings or through tall wrought windows leaded into many panes. The pieces of furniture are large, curious, and fantastic, armed with locks and secrets

like refined souls. Mirrors, metals, hangings, goldsmith's work and pottery, play for the eyes a mute and mysterious symphony; and from all things, from every corner, from the cracks of drawers and from the folds of hangings, exhales a singular odour, a "forget-me-not" of Sumatra, which is, as it were, the soul of the abode.

A real country of Cockaigne, I assure you, where all is beautiful, clean, and shining, like a clear conscience, like a bright array of kitchen crockery, like splendid jewellery of gold, like many-coloured jewellery of silver! All the treasures of the world have found their way there, as to the house of a hard-working man who has put the whole world in his debt. Singular country, excelling others as Art excels Nature, where Nature is refashioned by dreams, where Nature is corrected, embellished, remoulded.

Let the alchemists of horticulture seek and seek again, let them set ever further and further back the limits to their happiness! Let them offer prizes of sixty and of a hundred thousand florins to whoever will solve their ambitious problems! For me, I have found my "black tulip" and my "blue dahlia!"

Incomparable flower, recaptured tulip, allegoric dahlia, it is there, is it not, in that beautiful country, so calm and so full of dreams, that you live and flourish? There, would you not be framed within your own analogy, and would you not see yourself again, reflected, as the mystics say, in your own "correspondence?"

Dreams, dreams ever! and the more delicate and ambitious the soul, the further do dreams estrange it from possible things. Every man carries within himself his natural dose of opium, ceasely secreted and renewed, and, from birth to death, how many hours can we reckon of positive pleasure, of successful and decided action? Shall we ever live in, shall we ever pass into, that picture which my mind has painted, that picture made in your image?

These treasures, this furniture, this luxury, this order, these odours, these miraculous flowers, are you. You too are the great rivers and the quiet canals. The vast ships that drift down them, laden with riches, from whose decks comes the sound of the monotonous songs of labouring sailors, are my thoughts which slumber or rise and fall

on your breast. You lead them softly towards the sea, which is the infinite, mirroring the depths of the sky in the crystal clearness of your soul; and when, weary of the surge and heavy with the spoils of the East, they return to the port of their birth, it is still my thoughts that come back enriched out of the infinite to you.

IV.

THE EYES OF THE POOR.

Ah! you want to know why I hate you to-day. It will probably be less easy for you to understand than for me to explain it to you; for you are, I think, the most perfect example of feminine impenetrability that could possibly be found.

We had spent a long day together, and it had seemed to me short. We had promised one another that we would think the same thoughts and that our two souls should become one soul; a dream which is not original, after all, except that, dreamed by all men, it has been realised by none.

In the evening you were a little tired, and you sat down outside a new café at the corner of a new boulevard, still littered with plaster and already displaying proudly its unfinished splendours. The café glittered. The very gas put on all the fervency of a fresh start, and lighted up with its full force the blinding whiteness of the walls, the dazzling sheets of glass in the mirrors, the gilt of cornices and mouldings, the chubby-cheeked pages straining back from hounds

in leash, the ladies laughing at the falcons on their wrists, the nymphs and goddesses carrying fruits and pies and game on their heads, the Hebes and Ganymedes holding out at arm's-length little jars of syrups or parti-coloured obelisks of ices; the whole of history and of mythology brought together to make a paradise for gluttons. Exactly opposite to us, in the roadway, stood a man of about forty years of age, with a weary face and a greyish beard, holding a little boy by one hand and carrying on the other arm a little fellow too weak to walk. He was taking the nurse-maid's place, and had brought his children out for a walk in the evening. All were in rags. The three faces were extraordinarily serious, and the six eyes stared fixedly at the new café with an equal admiration, differentiated in each according to age.

The father's eyes said: "How beautiful it is! how beautiful it is! One would think that all the gold of the poor world had found its way to these walls." The boy's eyes said: "How beautiful it is! how beautiful it is! But that is a house which only people who are not like us can enter." As for the little

one's eyes, they were too fascinated to express anything but stupid and utter joy.

Song-writers say that pleasure ennobles the soul and softens the heart. The song was right that evening, so far as I was concerned. Not only was I touched by this family of eyes, but I felt rather ashamed of our glasses and decanters, so much too much for our thirst. I turned to look at you, dear love, that I might read my own thought in you; I gazed deep into your eyes, so beautiful and so strangely sweet, your green eyes that are the home of caprice and under the sovereignty of the Moon; and you said to me: "Those people are insupportable to me with their staring saucer-eyes! Couldn't you tell the head waiter to send them away?"

So hard is it to understand one another, dearest, and so incommunicable is thought, even between people who are in love!

V.

WINDOWS.

He who looks in through an open window never sees so many things as he who looks at a shut window. There is nothing more profound, more mysterious, more fertile, more gloomy, or more dazzling, than a window lighted by a candle. What we can see in the sunlight is always less interesting than what goes on behind the panes of a window. In that dark or luminous hollow, life lives, life dreams, life suffers.

Across the waves of roofs, I can see a woman of middle age, wrinkled, poor, who is always leaning over something, and who never goes out. Out of her face, out of her dress, out of her attitude, out of nothing almost, I have made up the woman's story, and sometimes I say it over to myself with tears.

If it had been a poor old man, I could have made up his just as easily.

And I go to bed, proud of having lived and suffered in others.

Perhaps you will say to me: "Are you sure that it is the real story?" What does it matter, what does any reality outside of myself matter, if it has helped me to live, to feel that I am, and what I am?

VI.

CROWDS.

It is not given to every man to take a bath of multitude: to play upon crowds is an art; and he alone can plunge, at the expense of humankind, into a debauch of vitality, to whom a fairy has bequeathed in his cradle the love of masks and disguises, the hate of home and the passion of travel.

Multitude, solitude: equal terms mutually convertible by the active and begetting poet. He who does not know how to people his solitude, does not know either how to be alone in a busy crowd.

The poet enjoys this incomparable privilege, to be at once himself and others. Like those wandering souls that go about seeking bodies, he enters at will the personality of every man. For him alone, every place is vacant; and if certain places seem to be closed against him, that is because in his eyes they are not worth the trouble of visiting.

The solitary and thoughtful walker derives a singular intoxication from this universal communion. He who mates easily with the

crowd knows feverish joys that must be for ever unknown to the egoist, shut up like a coffer, and to the sluggard, imprisoned like a shell-fish. He adopts for his own all the occupations, all the joys and all the sorrows that circumstance sets before him.

What men call love is small indeed, narrow and weak indeed, compared with this ineffable orgie, this sacred prostitution of the soul which gives itself up wholly (poetry and charity!) to the unexpected which happens, to the stranger as he passes.

It is good sometimes that the happy of this world should learn, were it only to humble their foolish pride for an instant, that there are higher, wider, and rarer joys than theirs. The founders of colonies, the shepherds of nations, the missionary priests, exiled to the ends of the earth, doubtless know something of these mysterious intoxications; and, in the midst of the vast family that their genius has raised about them, they must sometimes laugh at the thought of those who pity them for their chaste lives and troubled fortunes.

VII.

THE CAKE.

I WAS travelling. The landscape in the midst of which I was seated was of an irresistible grandeur and sublimity. Something no doubt at that moment passed from it into my soul. My thoughts fluttered with a lightness like that of the atmosphere; vulgar passions, such as hate and profane love, seemed to me now as far away as the clouds that floated in the gulfs beneath my feet; my soul seemed to me as vast and pure as the dome of the sky that enveloped me; the remembrance of earthly things came as faintly to my heart as the thin tinkle of the bells of unseen herds, browsing far, far away, on the slope of another mountain. Across the little motionless lake, black with the darkness of its immense depth, there passed from time to time the shadow of a cloud, like the shadow of an airy giant's cloak, flying through heaven. And I remember that this rare and solemn sensation, caused by a vast and perfectly silent movement, filled me with mingled joy and fear. In a word, thanks to the enrapturing beauty

about me, I felt that I was at perfect peace with myself and with the universe; I even believe that, in my complete forgetfulness of all earthly evil, I had come to think the newspapers are right after all, and man was born good; when, incorrigible matter renewing its exigences, I sought to refresh the fatigue and satisfy the appetite caused by so lengthy a climb. I took from my pocket a large piece of bread, a leathern cup, and a small bottle of a certain elixir which the chemists at that time sold to tourists, to be mixed, on occasion, with liquid snow.

I was quietly cutting my bread when a slight noise made me look up. I saw in front of me a little ragged urchin, dark and dishevelled, whose hollow eyes, wild and supplicating, devoured the piece of bread. And I heard him gasp, in a low, hoarse voice, the word: "Cake!" I could not help laughing at the appellation with which he thought fit to honour my nearly white bread, and I cut off a big slice and offered it to him. Slowly he came up to me, not taking his eyes from the coveted object; then, snatching it out of my hand, he stepped quickly back, as if he feared that my offer

was not sincere, or that I had already repented of it.

But at the same instant he was knocked over by another little savage, who had sprung from I know not where, and who was so precisely like the first that one might have taken them for twin brothers. They rolled over on the ground together, struggling for the possession of the precious booty, neither willing to share it with his brother. The first, exasperated, clutched the second by the hair; and the second seized one of the ears of the first between his teeth, and spat out a little bleeding morsel with a fine oath in dialect. The legitimate proprietor of the cake tried to hook his little claws into the usurper's eyes; the latter did his best to throttle his adversary with one hand, while with the other he endeavoured to slip the prize of war into his pocket. But, heartened by despair, the loser pulled himself together, and sent the victor sprawling with a blow of the head in his stomach. Why describe a hideous fight which indeed lasted longer than their childish strength seemed to promise? The cake travelled from hand to hand, and changed

from pocket to pocket, at every moment but, alas, it changed also in size; and when at length, exhausted, panting and bleeding, they stopped from the sheer impossibility of going on, there was no longer any cause of feud; the slice of bread had disappeared, and lay scattered in crumbs like the grains of sand with which it was mingled.

The sight had darkened the landscape for me, and dispelled the joyous calm in which my soul had lain basking; I remained saddened for quite a long time, saying over and over to myself: "There is then a wonderful country in which bread is called cake, and is so rare a delicacy that it is enough in itself to give rise to a war literally fratricidal!"

VIII.

EVENING TWILIGHT.

THE day is over. A great restfulness descends into poor minds that the day's work has wearied ; and thoughts take on the tender and dim colours of twilight.

Nevertheless from the mountain peak there comes to my balcony, through the transparent clouds of evening, a great clamour, made up of a crowd of discordant cries, dulled by distance into a mournful harmony, like that of the rising tide or of a storm brewing.

Who are the hapless ones to whom evening brings no calm ; to whom, as to the owls, the coming of night is the signal for a witches' sabbat? The sinister ululation comes to me from the hospital on the mountain ; and, in the evening, as I smoke, and look down on the quiet of the immense valley, bristling with houses, each of whose windows seem to say, "Here is peace, here is domestic happiness!" I can, when the wind blows from the heights, lull my astonished thought with this imitation of the harmonies of hell.

Twilight excites madmen. I remember I had two friends whom twilight made quite ill. One of them lost all sense of social and friendly amenities, and flew at the first-comer like a savage. I have seen him throw at the waiter's head an excellent chicken, in which he imagined he had discovered some insulting hieroglyph. Evening, harbinger of profound delights, spoilt for him the most succulent things.

The other, a prey to disappointed ambition, turned gradually, as the daylight dwindled, sourer, more gloomy, more nettlesome. Indulgent and sociable during the day, he was pitiless in the evening; and it was not only on others, but on himself, that he vented the rage of his twilight mania.

The former died mad, unable to recognise his wife and child; the latter still keeps the restlessness of a perpetual disquietude; and, if all the honours that republics and princes can confer were heaped upon him, I believe that the twilight would still quicken in him the burning envy of imaginary distinctions. Night, which puts its own darkness into their minds, brings light to mine; and, though it is by no means rare for the same

cause to bring about opposite results, I am always as it were perplexed and alarmed by it.

O night! O refreshing dark! for me you are the summons to an inner feast, you are the deliverer from anguish! In the solitude of the plains, in the stony labyrinths of a city, scintillation of stars, outburst of gas-lamps, you are the fireworks of the goddess Liberty!

Twilight, how gentle you are and how tender! The rosy lights that still linger on the horizon, like the last agony of day under the conquering might of its night; the flaring candle-flames that stain with dull red the last glories of the sunset; the heavy draperies that an invisible hand draws out of the depths of the East, mimic all those complex feelings that war on one another in the heart of man at the solemn moments of life.

Would you not say that it was one of those strange costumes worn by dancers, in which the tempered splendours of a shining skirt show through a dark and transparent gauze, as, through the darkness of the present, pierces the delicious past? And

the wavering stars of gold and silver with which it is shot, are they not those fires of fancy which take light never so well as under the deep mourning of the night?

IX.

"ANYWHERE OUT OF THE WORLD."

LIFE is a hospital, in which every patient is possessed by the desire of changing his bed. One would prefer to suffer near the fire, and another is certain that he would get well if he were by the window.

It seems to me that I should always be happy if I were somewhere else, and this question of moving house is one that I am continually talking over with my soul.

"Tell me, my soul, poor chilly soul, what do you say to living in Lisbon? It must be very warm there, and you would bask merrily, like a lizard. It is by the sea; they say that it is built of marble, and that the people have such a horror of vegetation that they tear up all the trees. There is a country after your own soul; a country made up of light and mineral, and with liquid to reflect them."

My soul makes no answer.

"Since you love rest, and to see moving things, will you come and live in that heavenly land, Holland? Perhaps you

would be happy in a country which you have so often admired in pictures. What do you say to Rotterdam, you who love forests of masts, and ships anchored at the doors of houses?"

My soul remains silent.

"Or perhaps Java seems to you more attractive? Well, there we shall find the mind of Europe married to tropical beauty."

Not a word. Can my soul be dead?

"Have you sunk then into so deep a stupor that only your own pain gives you pleasure? If that be so, let us go to the lands that are made in the likeness of Death. I know exactly the place for us, poor soul! We will book our passage to Torneo. We will go still further, to the last limits of the Baltic; and, if it be possible, further still from life; we will make our abode at the Pole. There the sun only grazes the earth, and the slow alternations of light and night put out variety and bring in the half of nothingness, monotony. There we can take great baths of darkness, while, from time to time, for our pleasure, the Aurora Borealis shall

scatter its rosy sheaves before us, like reflections of fireworks in hell!"

At last my soul bursts into speech, and wisely she cries to me: "Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world!"

X.

A HEROIC DEATH.

FANCIOULLE was an admirable buffoon, and almost one of the friends of the Prince. But for persons professionally devoted to the comic, serious things have a fatal attraction, and, strange as it may seem that ideas of patriotism and liberty should seize despotically upon the brain of a player, one day Fancioulle joined in a conspiracy formed by some discontented nobles.

There exist everywhere sensible men to denounce those individuals of atrabiliar disposition who seek to depose princes, and, without consulting it, to reconstitute society. The lords in question were arrested, together with Fancioulle, and condemned to death.

I would readily believe that the Prince was almost sorry to find his favourite actor among the rebels. The Prince was neither better nor worse than any other Prince; but an excessive sensibility rendered him, in many cases, more cruel and more despotic than all his fellows. Passionately enamoured of the fine arts, an excellent

connoisseur as well, he was truly insatiable of pleasures. Indifferent enough in regard to men and morals, himself a real artist, he feared no enemy but Ennui, and the extravagant efforts that he made to fly or to vanquish this tyrant of the world would certainly have brought upon him, on the part of a severe historian, the epithet of "monster," had it been permitted, in his dominions, to write anything whatever which did not tend exclusively to pleasure, or to astonishment, which is one of the most delicate forms of pleasure. The great misfortune of the Prince was that he had no theatre vast enough for his genius. There are young Neros who are stifled within too narrow limits, and whose names and whose intentions will never be known to future ages. An unforeseeing Providence had given to this man faculties greater than his dominions.

Suddenly the rumour spread that the sovereign had decided to pardon all the conspirators; and the origin of this rumour was the announcement of a special performance in which Fancioulle would play one of his best *rôles*, and at which even the

condemned nobles, it was said, were to be present, an evident sign, added superficial minds, of the generous tendencies of the Prince.

On the part of a man so naturally and deliberately eccentric, anything was possible, even virtue, even mercy, especially if he could hope to find in it unexpected pleasures. But to those who, like myself, had succeeded in penetrating further into the depths of this sick and curious soul, it was infinitely more probable that the Prince was wishful to estimate the quality of the scenic talents of a man condemned to death. He would profit by the occasion to obtain a physiological experience of a *capital* interest, and to verify to what extent the habitual faculties of an artist would be altered or modified by the extraordinary situation in which he found himself. Beyond this, did there exist in his mind an intention, more or less defined, of mercy? It is a point that has never been solved.

At last, the great day having come, the little court displayed all its pomps, and it would be difficult to realise, without having seen it, what splendour the privileged classes

of a little state with limited resources can show forth, on a really solemn occasion. This was a doubly solemn one, both from the wonder of its display and from the mysterious moral interest attaching to it.

The Sieur Fancioulle excelled especially in parts either silent or little burdened with words, such as are often the principal ones in those fairy plays whose object is to represent symbolically the mystery of life. He came upon the stage lightly and with a perfect ease, which in itself lent some support, in the minds of the noble public, to the idea of kindness and forgiveness.

When we say of an actor, "This is a good actor," we make use of a formula which implies that under the personage we can still distinguish the actor, that is to say, art, effort, will. Now, if an actor should succeed in being, in relation to the personage whom he is appointed to express, precisely what the finest statues of antiquity, miraculously animated, living, walking, seeing, would be in relation to the confused general idea of beauty, this would be, undoubtedly, a singular and unheard of case. Fancioulle was, that evening, a perfect idealisation,

which it was impossible not to suppose living, possible, real. The buffoon came and went, he laughed, wept, was convulsed, with an indestructible aureole about his head, an aureole invisible to all, but visible to me, and in which were blended, in a strange amalgam, the rays of Art and the martyr's glory. Fancioulle brought, by I know not what special grace, something divine and supernatural into even the most extravagant buffooneries. My pen trembles, and the tears of an emotion which I cannot forget rise to my eyes, as I try to describe to you this never-to-be-forgotten evening. Fancioulle proved to me, in a peremptory, an irrefutable way, that the intoxication of Art is surer than all others to veil the terrors of the gulf; that genius can act a comedy on the threshold of the grave with a joy that hinders it from seeing the grave, lost, as it is, in a Paradise shutting out all thought of the grave and of destruction.

The whole audience, *blasé* and frivolous as it was, soon fell under the all-powerful sway of the artist. Not a thought was left of death, of mourning, or of punishment. All gave themselves up, without disquietude,

to the manifold delights caused by the sight of a masterpiece of living art. Explosions of joy and admiration again and again shook the dome of the edifice with the energy of a continuous thunder. The Prince himself, in an ecstasy, joined in the applause of his court.

Nevertheless, to a discerning eye, his emotion was not unmixed. Did he feel himself conquered in his power as despot? humiliated in his art as the striker of terror into hearts, of chill into souls? Such suppositions, not exactly justified, but not absolutely unjustifiable, passed through my mind as I contemplated the face of the Prince, on which a new pallor gradually overspread its habitual paleness, as snow overspreads snow. His lips compressed themselves tighter and tighter, and his eyes lighted up with an inner fire like that of jealously or of spite, even while he applauded the talents of his old friend, the strange buffoon, who played the buffoon so well in the face of death. At a certain moment, I saw his Highness lean towards a little page, stationed behind him, and whisper in his ear. The roguish face of the pretty child

lit up with a smile, and he briskly quitted the Prince's box as if to execute some urgent commission.

A few minutes later a shrill and prolonged hiss interrupted Fanciоulle in one of his finest moments, and rent alike every ear and heart. And from the part of the house from whence this unexpected note of disapproval had sounded, a child darted into a corridor with stifled laughter.

Fanciоulle, shaken, roused out of his dream, closed his eyes, then re-opened them, almost at once, extraordinarily wide, opened his mouth as if to breathe convulsively, staggered a little forward, a little backward, and then fell stark dead on the boards.

Had the hiss, swift as a sword, really frustrated the hangman? Had the Prince himself divined all the homicidal efficacy of his ruse? It is permitted to doubt it. Did he regret his dear and inimitable Fanciоulle? It is sweet and legitimate to believe it.

The guilty nobles had enjoyed the performance of comedy for the last time. They were effaced from life.

Since then, many mimes, justly appreciated in different countries, have played

before the court of ———; but none of them have ever been able to recall the marvellous talents of Fancioulle, or to rise to the same *favour*.

XI.

BE DRUNKEN.

Be always drunken. Nothing else matters: that is the only question. If you would not feel the horrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and crushing you to the earth, be drunken continually.

Drunken with what? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will. But be drunken.

And if sometimes, on the stairs of a palace, or on the green side of a ditch, or in the dreary solitude of your own room, you should awaken and the drunkenness be half or wholly slipped away from you, ask of the wind, or of the wave, or of the star, or of the bird, or of the clock, of whatever flies, or sighs, or rocks, or sings, or speaks, ask what hour it is; and the wind, wave, star, bird, clock, will answer you: "It is the hour to be drunken! Be drunken, if you would not be martyred slaves of Time; be drunken continually! With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will."

XII.

EPILOGUE.

WITH heart at rest I climbed the citadel's
Steep height, and saw the city as from a tower,
Hospital, brothel, prison, and such hells,

Where evil comes up softly like a flower.
Thou knowest, O Satan, patron of my pain,
Not for vain tears I went up at that hour;

But, like an old sad faithful lecher, fain
To drink delight of that enormous trull
Whose hellish beauty makes me young again.

Whether thou sleep, with heavy vapours full,
Sodden with day, or, new apparelled, stand
In gold-laced veils of evening beautiful,

I love thee, infamous city! Harlots and
Hunted have pleasures of their own to give,
The vulgar herd can never understand.

The Bibelot

In 1895 Mr. Henry W. Nevinson published his first volume. Since then his work as war-correspondent and all-round contributor to leading English and American periodicals has made him a sufficiently well-known man of letters. That he has had the courage of several unpopular convictions; daring to criticise his contemporaries, Kipling for example, in a manner peculiarly his own, and, as one of a noble few has found something more than food for the laughter of Parliamentary fools in the demand for woman's right to vote, does not lessen our regard for his sense of equity and fair play. Quixotic indeed as such attitude may seem one must never fail to take into account the marching morrows!

It is, however, as a writer of imaginative prose and verse that we wish to consider Mr. Nevinson. Two of his books especially appeal to us: The Plea of Pan (*1901*) *from which* The Fire of Prometheus *is taken, and* Between the Acts (*1903*) *in which the poetry of life, past or present, is still further expanded to the measure of his great intent.*

When such a passage confronts you—"But this rough hand, now more perishable than a stone"—words of a sublime Socialism raising all ranks from the dust—you think you will never be angry with a brother again, that the world has at once become your country! As an Academy *reviewer said of the* Plea *at the time: "It is a plea—in which deadly earnestness is mingled with humour—for a return to nature for the elemental passions, for the wholesome animality of man." And of its author: "He is a pagan through and through and his call to go forth into the wilderness is based on the desire to make not saints, but men."*

A brief poem from Between the Acts *may also serve to show what may be done at a very high level of expression and thought within the compass of a single sestet. It is entitled* At Thirty-five:

"Now in the centre of life's arch I stand,
And view its curve descending from this day;
How brief the road from birth's mysterious strand!
How brief its passage till it close in grey!
Yet by this bridge went all the immortal band,
And the world's Saviour did not reach half-way."

FOR JUNE:
TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE
BY JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.").

THE FIRE OF PROMETHEUS
By
HENRY W. NEVINSON.

DEDICATED TO
THE EARTH-MOTHER.

(*Prefixed to* The Plea of Pan.)

To Earth, who bore the dragon broods,
Spawning beside the unnavigated waves
Devouring lizards with bats' wings;
Who housed a terror deep in woods,
And down the gulf of fiery caves
Wrought mammoths and plate-armoured things;

Who glories in the tiger's might,
And feeds the snake, sin's counterpart;
Who drinks the blood of clanging wars,
And bears through the silences of night
The melody of a lover's heart
Among the unchanged, untrodden stars.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

THE FIRE OF PROMETHEUS.

THROUGH the long noon, while the sun marched as usual across the enormous sky — through the dead hours of the day, when thunder fell upon us like blows, and the lightning's white arm could hardly pierce the shrieking columns of the rain, I lay upon the mountain-side among the soldiers of a large army. In war, as in extreme grief, a numbness overcomes the spirit; the mind swoons under the stress of anxiety or pain; it can feel no more, and can realise no more. Situations which at other times would appear to it incredible and dreamlike with terror, are then quite natural, as though they came in the ordinary course. Horror, astonishment, the realisation of the truth — these are things that grow up afterwards, but for the time, perception and even fear are stifled by something, which is perhaps their own excess. My chief thought was a weary longing for the night. When would the night come to shelter us from that other shrieking storm which swept across the woof of drenching water? When would it come to lull that other thunder which rattled and paused and was renewed and died away and roared again with quickened rage as

though in mortal haste for our destruction? Hour after hour I lay, peering vainly into the chaos of rain and lightning and invisible peril, while around me the air sang and growled with lead, and men died. The fate of an army, the issue of a war, depended on the mountain ridge where I was lying, and of such advantages as an attacking force can hold, the enemy had all. Yet I no more considered defeat than did the gods when the Titans set about their assault upon heaven, and the men around me seemed to realise no more than myself either the importance of the struggle or its meaning to themselves.

Food, drink, and the coming night that would end our danger — those were the things we thought of; and among the coarse grass and rocks on which we lay, beetles and ants were hurrying up and down, seeking escape from the stormy rivulets of the rain.

Night came at last. Somewhere behind that whirling curtain of storm and war, the sun departed to light the tinkling lines of muleteers up quiet gorges of the Andes. Renewed now and again in spitting out-

bursts like the end of angry words, the firing slackened. In the gathering darkness, forms of unusual size began to move about. Men got up from invisible hiding-places and shook themselves, as though shaking off the fear of death. With just the same interest they tried to rub the slime from their knees. They spat, and turned their heads, and looked at each other. One or two whispered something, as people whisper in church or at a funeral. An officer came by, trying to walk as usual. He contrived to speak aloud after a few attempts, and fire and thunder mixed never fell on us with so strange a shock as the sound of his voice. The men watched him go as ghosts might watch a fellow-ghost in limbo, and his word of command was passed almost silently from mouth to mouth.

Tormented by thirst, I turned and scrambled down the hill to the narrow road which in peace time had led from one little village to another far away across the position we were defending. A mere track of loose stones and mud, it was now choked from end to end by all the chaos which eddies behind the course of battle: the wounded

on stretchers dripping red, the wounded in carts, the wounded tottering back on their own feet, sobbing as they went; ammunition wagons with terrified and screaming mules; batteries taking position in reserve; dying horses being urged out of the way with whips and bayonets; broken-down limbers; reinforcements in companies threading their way to the front; orderlies trying in vain to gallop through the muddle of it all. Splashing along the gutter which the rain had washed beside the road, I got among the scattered houses at last. Nearly all were dark and empty, but from the main church as I passed it came the cries of the wounded and the quiet hum of surgeons and attendants at their work. It had been suddenly turned into a hospital. Lights were burning inside, and cast the crimsons and golds of the stained windows upon the steaming, misty air. I don't know why the sight of those colours affected me so strangely then. Hunger and exhaustion may have given distinctness to the vision they called up, but to most people the outside of a lighted church at night is full of half-forgotten associations, and one of a child's first mys-

teries is the enchanted brilliance of the windows as he leaves the porch to the sound of the organ's voluntary.

In the midst of all the pain and wretchedness, there came to me the smell of an evening in early spring; and instead of the crowded and slushy track between the bare rock and the starveling houses appeared a gentle, gravelly road, guided by clipped hedgerows through plough and pasture from which a god could have scraped the fatted soil as a thrifty nurse scrapes off the children's butter. The horses waiting with the squire's carriage were like the land, their shining quarters all coated over with laps and folds of fatness. So were the congregation, who, having sung "A few more years shall roll," and prayed to be led through the desert here, came out of the church door, well clothed, well washed, well fed. Like the Ancient Mariner watching the water-snakes at play, I blessed them unaware. All had come to the service warmed and enlivened by their tea, and were now returning to supper with Sunday night's exhilaration of duty performed and tongues released from religious silence,

whilst the collection-plate tinkled at the door. Issuing into blue air from the bright orange of the porch, lover signalled to lover under a silver star. So the ghostly but substantial procession passed out into a land of bread and flesh and milk and drinkable water, secure of the morrow, and rooted in a past of uninterrupted days. As I watched them move comfortably down the poignant ways of memory, I knew that an exactly similar procession would be crossing that ancient porch to-night (for it was Sunday); lovers would signal their meetings in the darkened lanes, the smell of violets would swim like dreams through the air, and from the fields the lambs cry sleepily. I wondered how it was possible for those people ever to be unhappy in their nestling homes. No misery seemed to count beside the wretchedness of war, and a longing for peace and all that peace means came over me. I longed for the tranquillity of the country lanes and the purple woods of spring; I longed for the spacious and quiet homes, for the silver smiling on the tablecloth and on the darkly gleaming sideboards, for the soft stir of women in the room and

the faint smell of their hair and dresses, for the talking and quick laughter, for the clean sheets on wholesome beds, and the glad calling of the rooks when morning came above the elms.

In a dark and empty shed which was now my home, I drank deep of a bucket into which the rain was dripping through the roof, and began eating my half biscuit, very slowly, to make it last. I was full of vague and bitter rage — rage at the grit and sand in the biscuit, at the slimy floor and the sopping rug under which I had to sleep — rage at the risk of death, which might prevent me seeing anything I loved again. I prayed to witness the enemy's quick and entire overthrow, to watch them scattered over the hills and swept from the plains by our pursuing guns. Only over their dead could we win the road to happiness, and now they were actually attacking us, and on the rocks our dead lay almost as thick as theirs. It seemed as though a natural law had gone crazy. Full of irritation and angry fears of what the night would bring to succeed so horrible a day, I fell asleep with exhaustion, while a thin dust of water

kept stealing down on me through the chinks of the boarding.

Hours passed before I woke, and then the rain had stopped and there was no more noise of wagons on the road. "Now is the time they 'll renew the attack," I said wearily to myself; and getting up from the filthy ground I went out again into the night and wandered back towards a part of the front where I had not been before, though it was a continuation of the same ridge which we had been defending. All was quiet now. Here and there I came upon little groups of our men along the line, stretched in sleep or huddled together for warmth, though the night was hot. Late and red the waning moon had risen, and it now gave an uncertain light, crossed by mists and films of moving cloud, the rear-guard of the storm. Stumbling over the rocks, I reached the further crest of the hill, where sentries were posted at intervals, and from there I could see down into the misty valley along which the enemy had come. Ridge after ridge of mountain stretched before me just discernible in the moonlight, and all looked so free and peaceful that war seemed an absurdity,

and with the mere desire of escape, as from an iron ring, I began to creep down the steep hillside. The dead ground soon concealed me from above, and I there sat down to brood and to await what might happen before the dawn.

I waited long in the silence, and then I suddenly heard something like the gentle movement of a shy animal, and looking to the side I saw a figure stooping down over a dark object lying upon the ground. The figure appeared to be shaking a man by the shoulder as though to wake him up. I got my revolver ready in my hand, but uncertain whether it might not be one of our own sentries, I first said in a low voice, "Hullo, there! Why can't you let the poor fellow sleep?"

"I 'm afraid I must," said the other without looking up: "yet it is but ten pulses of the blood since he was awake."

Sitting down, he raised the man's head and supported it on his knees, as gently as a woman moves her sleeping lover. I went and peered into the motionless face. Under the dim moon it was a blur of greenish white, like the moon herself.

"Why, he 's one of the enemy!" I said, seeing the badge on his cap.

"No," the other answered; "he is dead." He took the man's hand, and one by one undid the tightly clenched fingers, stretching them out and watching them slowly curl together again.

"Look," he said, "touch this queer thing, and you will find it still warmish and limp. Only sixty pulses of the blood ago it was awake with life. See what peculiar stuff it is, solid and yet full of red and blue waters which have only just stopped running backwards and forwards — oh, far quicker than the waves upon a shore; a network substance of tender cords and jellies, finer than the loom, covered with a porous coating, more pliant than silk, and fitting closer than a light lady's robe. Five hooks, you see, with props and sticks of hollowed lime, pulleys and hinges complete, and tipped with horn. And all alive — 'all but alive' still, as the honest fishmongers say — only three minutes ago quivering with the last beat of life. Only this morning it buttoned this jacket, or carried food to this poor mouth, just as the life devised, and far

better than any contrivance man has ever made. But now nothing can set it moving ever again. I tried to hold in the life and keep it mingled with the body, I tried to catch it by the throat and prevent its escape. But while I clutched it tight, it was gone through my fingers. To feel it go was worse than a lover's longing which vanishes in waking. For the life had been there, and now it was not anywhere at all."

"Many things are sad, but death is not the saddest, and the poor fellow is only dead," I said, speaking like the chorus of a play.

"You are young compared to me, and therefore wise," he answered. "But this rough hand, now more perishable than a stone — what astonishing things it has done since it was pink and small, pressing against some mother's breast. Now it is lined and twisted and embrowned, just like a wild hawk's claw. Year after year it has harnessed the horse and ox, and scraped the mud from their coated fur. It has cloven the woods for fire and dug trenches where water should run. Inside it is hard and knotted with the plough and spade. It has

shorn the wool from sheep, and flung the seeds of corn trustfully upon the earth. It has shovelled snow from the cottage door. It has heaped a road across the swampy fen. Steeped in filth, and caked with dust that clave to its sweat, it has seemed but a clod of earth, more insensible than the cloven feet of oxen. Yet it has known pleasure better than the marble hands of gods. At the fire it has warmed itself, and after the heat of the day it has held the wine. It has touched the hands of other men, and stroked the lamb's-wool hair of children, and carried them along the weary road. Do you not suppose that it too has very likely throbbed with ecstasy at the touch of the beloved? Has it not embraced her, and been laid upon her heart, feeling the bell of her life ring muffled in her softness? What has the King of Babylon's hand done more or better than this poor bit of cold and greenish stuff which already is falling back into the earth it knew so well? Yet all such things he cast behind him, and in the assault was with the first, although the last to die. As he lay unnoticed in this cranny of the rocks, scorched by the sun

and sodden by the rain, he knew all day long that he should never see his little farm again, or wake at dawn, or hear the voice of any woman."

"If he so valued his life," I said, "he should not have come out to battle."

"Do you not value your life?" he answered. "To him it was as sweet as to you. Do you wish never to see again the things and people you are fond of, or never again to do what most you like? It was for love of him that this coloured rag about his neck was made. He was among my worshippers; oh, why was he not content in all the good things I can give — in rising up and lying down, in love and pleasant food and all the deep laughter of the world? Now he lies here quenched. His beard and hair are matted with blood and water mixed, his clothes are rent into holes and coated with mud, his toes stick out through the fragments of his boots. What was it drove him on to leave his home and flocks and all he loved beside? In his heart there burned a raging fire. The Titans possessed him, and now like a Titan he lies prone."

"Poor fellow," I said, "he has met with a

strange epitaph, who all his life was insignificant and unknown — now to be called a Titan when he is dead, and more insignificant still."

"I admit," he said, laughing, with a far-off look as though he were calling up scenes long hidden; "I admit the outward resemblance is not very great. Dear and savage sons of earth, gigantic and uncouth, they wallowed in ocean, making it boil like a pot, and in their wrath or jollity they hurled mountains with all their trees from land to land. Black and red they were, and their fiery hair streamed upon the clouds as the sun went down in storm. With the sides of precipices they built their homes, and on beds of flat-topped hills they stretched their coiling limbs to rest, shaking their fists in exultation among the clouds when morning woke them. The joints of behemoth were their food, and with pails of foaming milk they washed down the slices of leviathan. The passion of their love shook the earth like earthquakes of the prime.

"Suddenly fate came — fate with the limits that conquer all things but the thoughts and desires of the soul. High in heaven, above

the topmost mountains, the trim, white gods appeared, and against their fastidious pride those earth-born monsters raged in vain, breathing out defiance, lifting their wild arms against the sky, piling up their mountains that the height of heaven might be scaled. The lightning blazed. On sea and land their bodies writhed. Before they could say 'What is it?' the lightning blazed. Bolts of fire hissed in their fiery blood. Shrieking they lay as the tempest shrieks upon the cliffs when speeding over the sea it smites the armoured and creviced rocks with blow on blow, and to the thunder of the poles their roarings made answer. Precipices fell to cover them, and the weight of mountains hardly stilled the twistings of their pain. Solid beds of granite were molten with their rage. The crust of the world was turned to jelly. It rent and split, and through its chinks their nostrils breathed the sulphurous smoke of their anguish. Up from deep chasms they spat their boiling spittle against the sky. With their sighs they shot the depths of the sea aloft, so that weak water stood up straight upon a watery floor like the columns of the gods. Through

their prisons of broad-based mountains their torturing fires burst the breathing-holes whence issued flame mixed with crags and fervent boulders and the melted water of adamantine ores. Day and night for ever the smoke of their misery hung upon the mountain-tops. Their crimson indignation scorched the cool grey clouds that fluttered past, and brought them to earth like birds transfixed. As often as they turned their weary sides, the world shook and the crystal pinnacles of the hills toppled into ruin. So sprawled across the face of earth they lay in lengths of bleeding cinder."

He ceased, and drew the limbs of the dead man straight, removing some rough stones from beneath him, as though they could hurt him still. Then leaning over him, he sighed and said: "The outward resemblance indeed is small; but though he is so far greater than all the Titans, his fate is much the same, and he has won a crown like theirs."

"Your speech," I said, "is ever a journey varied by collisions."

Looking up like simplicity surprised, he answered: "But is it not a glorious crown

to be well lamented? And the Titans, you know, had that advantage. Why, the whole circle of the world joined in lamentation for their ancient sovereignty — the days when things went merrily, though with some pleasing disorder. The dear Earth mourned over them, beweeping with bitter tears the pangs of children whose bones her young womb had formed. And did not the poet tell us that all who loved the wild young Earth mourned too — the wanderers of Asia, and those who pitch beside the lake at the world's edge, and the spearmen watching like eagles from the peaks above the gulf of nothingness. Was it not a crown of triumph to touch the hearts which none could tame — the breastless girls who lay the bow and not the baby to their side, and sweep across the desert, horse and limbs beclouded in their whirling hair? Or think of Atlas, upon whom fell the bitterest doom that can befall the damned — the doom of usefulness. Bound in steel, he propped the turning dome of heaven, and but for him the hosts of stars would have fluttered down upon the earth like twinkling snow. Yet the poet says:

'For him the waves of the sea are heard
Moaning in cadence, and the precipitous gulf
Groans, and the black chasm of the unseen world
Mutters its deep-hid woe;
Yea, from the holy streams a pitying voice
Whispers of sorrow as they brightly go.'

Would you choose the acclamations of victory rather than be mourned like that? Crowns are of many kinds, and there are gods who linger with the weaker side. Let us therefore lament this man, as the Titans were lamented."

"With all my heart," I answered. "But, after all, the Titans were ignorant and mistaken. The gods were against them."

"Oh yes, I know," he sighed; "any one can see that now. There was one of them saw it at the time, and being neither ignorant nor mistaken himself, he even helped the gods. Yet in the end he fared no better for his foresight. There is a cliff in Caucasus. At its foot the innumerable waves are smiling. Above it moves the scorching sun, and darkness warps it with the frost. An eagle tears the heart that so loved mankind."

As he spoke, he undid the dead man's filthy and torn shirt, and smoothed the dark

hair on his chest, down which the blood had trickled.

"Here, indeed," he said, "the fire of Prometheus has gone out. But have you never thought of fire how strange it is, how it multiplies itself more quickly than lovers, more quickly than the jelly of the sea, which splits and is two? With even greater similitude to itself it produces its young; for in a moment a hundred flames may spring, yet each will be the same flame as the first and as every other. Even if the first goes out, it lives identical and unappeased in all the rest. Of the same nature is the fire of Prometheus. Here it has gone out, but who knows how many flames may already have sprung from it? — each the same as itself, or differing only in brightness or colour according to the heart in which it dwells."

"I have heard," I said, "how the one intelligent Titan brought fire down from heaven to men, carrying it in a fennel-stalk, of all strange warming-pans, and how wofully he suffered for his philanthropic ways. But I suppose the fire you now speak of is something different?"

"I am hardly sure," he answered, with his puzzled air. "For I have seen this inner fire make the inside of a face reflect its flame, just as a blazing log reddens the outside. And when the inner fire dies away, the face turns to dull ashes, like burnt love-tokens. I have felt that if a heart in which this fire kindled, could suddenly be laid bare, bright tongues of flame would leap from it as from a forge blown by the bellows; and sometimes I have seen the very depths of human eyes turn crimson with little points of fire — more crimson than a hare's eye when you catch it sideways in the sun. So that I am inclined to think the inner and outer fires may originally have been the same, and now only differ in the stuff on which they feed. But if I am wrong, please laugh at my simplicity."

"I think you yourself," I said, "are never far from laughter; but I cannot laugh to-night, being sorrowful."

"Nay," he answered, "if you will not laugh, and are sorrowful enough for understanding, I might tell you a story, almost as short as strange, about that selfsame fire.

"You remember what the poet tells us

about the race of poor little mortal men and women when first they began to venture out upon the scum which gathered over the boiling star of earth. It was still warm in parts and everywhere flexible, so that what to-day was a plain might to-morrow be tossed up into a snow-capped mountain, or sunk to a lake, full of bitumen and biting salts. That condition of things was enough by itself to give great uncertainty to existence, and upon this bewildering surface men crept about, astonished and at random, never knowing what might happen next, or in what altitude and surroundings they might wake in the morning. Understanding no guidance of stars or of seasons, they lived in shocks, as when we slide in sleep from catastrophe to catastrophe. So the poet, describing their condition, says:

> 'Seeing they saw not, in those ancient days,
> And hearing heard not, but like shapes of dreams,
> Their life was one long whirl of inconsequence.'

"Of course they enjoyed no comforts of expensive simplicity such as you love. They did not even build sunny little houses, but for shelter from rain and heat they grubbed

holes with their claws like phantom ants, or lay huddled together in slimy caverns where the roof dripped upon them till they steamed. In cold and damp and misery they lived, uncertain of the morrow, and they stayed their hunger by swallowing seeds and berries, or if they saw a four-footed animal sick and dying they crowded round him pelting him with stones, and then leapt upon his body with gluttonous howls, tearing his limbs asunder and gnawing them like lions; for they were not at all refined.

"But Prometheus, being only half a god, pitied their wretchedness, as he went among them to and fro from heaven. You know what strange services he did the poor creatures, for he himself described it all to those dear girls of the sea who came to cheer his lonely suffering with the sighs of their little bosoms and with commonplace as tender as their own caresses. Birds know the coming seasons, but poor man had to be taught their order by the punctual stars, which, as perhaps you may have heard, do not run about anyhow as they like, but have their risings and settings fitted with extreme nicety. Stars are, no doubt, the best guides to the

future, but the Titan taught men other signs also by which to make a pretty fair guess at what was likely to happen: such as the difference between false dreams and true, the meaning of haunting sounds at night or dawn, and of the flight and habits of birds. He taught them too the more difficult art of calculating probabilities by the shape and colour of the insides of sacrificed animals, and by the general appearance of a sirloin at dinner. By such means he saved many mighty armies, giving the enemy over to destruction instead. Further, he told men what herbs to drink or chew in sickness — a matter in which dogs had some knowledge, but man none — whether helibore was best, or mandragora, or mint, or poppy-seed, or fox-glove, or garlic which gives heroic heart; and what was good as a soothing plaster for wounds, whether pounded nipple-wort or grated cheese mingled with honey. Then he taught them the use of the wheel, and how saving it was to harness other animals than themselves to their carts. More wonderful still, he made the white-winged wagons that flit across the sea. In crystal he showed them thin veins of rustless gold, and from

lumps of uncouth rock he hammered out the sword.

"One singularly beautiful gift of a very different kind he also gave them, though the poets have not made much of it, perhaps because, having it in abundance themselves, they hardly realised its beauty. You remember how the Titan said:

> 'I stopped man looking at the truth of fate,
> And in his heart I lodged the blinding hopes.'

"That is the golden gift which casts a golden gleam about the world, making the sun appear more glorious than he is, and giving deeper blues and blacks and greens to the sea; making the sea, indeed, appear to be a beautiful or terrific being, though we know it is only so many jugsful of salted water, and to a dog or horse it is dangerous and nasty to drink, but no more. For the dog and horse see the truth of fate; they see the bare facts of things, and when they come to a stream they drink of it, but do not worship. Man alone is blinded by the Promethean gift, and passing over reality with indifference, he fixes his vision on things which are not there. In the trans-

lucent pools of the stream he alone can see the beautiful spirit sitting with amber hair, just as the lover beholds something beatified and divine in his maiden, who very likely is only a poor unwashed and witless thing, not in the least nobler than himself. In his own heart also man is blinded to grim fate, and sees a finer spirit than exists. No one appears to himself quite so bad as he really is. When he had to die, the matricide lamented what an artist was dying, and in his own judgment Phalaris would have deserved the hemlock almost as little as the Philosopher. Wherever he moves through the world, man sees around him the fool, the knave, the scoundrel, the murderer, the swindler, the luster, the drunkard, the glutton, the coward, the traitor, the hypocrite, the braggart, the idiot, the gossip, the weakling, the mean and crawling soul. Yet in mankind, which is a combination of all these indifferent creatures, he sees something great and admirable; in the midst of unnatural cruelty he speaks of humanity as though it were the common possession of the human race, and of virtue as the proper quality of man. Some indeed are so richly endowed

with these blinding and beneficent hopes, that they move through the world as though they had but one step to reach the Blessed Isles, of which they see the assurance in the colours of sunset clouds, or in the riding moon, or in the gleams of loveliness that flit across men's hearts like sunshine on dark mountains. By such men evil things are speedily forgotten, and a radiance of joy dances before their eyes. To them the common scenes of earth are illuminated by a glamour of sweet or heroic associations, and even through the ceilings of domestic architecture they ever behold the stars. Sad and impatient they may well be, overcome by a wild yearning for something which even their hearts can hardly imagine, yet they are surrounded by a glory which exists but for them, and is nowhere found. Or may we perhaps say that in a sense it actually exists by their means, and that their passionate conception has indeed the power to create the things they seek; just as lovers create something that is themselves and yet separate and substantial? Or if that thought appears to you too beautiful even for hope, let us remember what the Iberians say; for

they dwell upon the verge of Ocean, and ever watching westward for the Blessed Isles with illimitable desire, about once every seven years they actually behold those islands far away, quivering with beauty on the horizon's rim. And thereupon they all set out in coracles, canoes, and boats of hide, with fire in their hearts and hands, for they know very well that if they can once fling fire on that enchanted land, it will abide with them for ever and be their home. Ah, son of mine," he went on, stroking the dead man's head, "on what land of desire did you seek to fling the fire of your soul? And what haven is this that you have found?"

As he seemed lost in thought, I said: "There it is again. You speak of the fire of the soul; but I only know that Prometheus brought fire to man in a fennel-stalk, and when you said that in this poor fellow here the fire of Prometheus had gone out, you were not speaking of the same fire as the kitchen grate, I suppose, excellent and comforting as that is."

He smiled shyly and rubbed his hairy face between his hands, on which the blood lay black.

"How you drive me on," he said, "worse than the gadfly! Did we not agree that the outer and inner fires were probably of the same nature, their manifestations being so closely alike?"

"Oh, if you are going to talk in symbols," I said, "it is hopeless for an ordinary man like me."

"And yet," he answered, "you yourself are but a symbol of the fighting soul upon her perilous way. Well, I can only repeat the things I myself heard long ago and in a different place to this.

"It was late twilight when I crept down the mountain cliffs to where the Titan lay. For in the daytime many strange beings came to see him — not only the tender mermaids, but that poor cow-headed thing, and Ocean with a shopman's reverence for success and his suspicion of people who have come down in the world. So I waited till his other visitors had gone, and then I crept along the edge to where he lay, indistinguishable from rock, save for the heaving of his breath. I stood beside him in silence, for there was nothing to say, and I saw his great limbs, how wearily they hung, being

tortured and clamped with spikes and metal bands. But as midnight passed, and I watched Orion and the Pleiades and all the chilly stars going on their way without a sign of care, I touched his arm where it was pinned to the rock, and said: 'Son of Earth, I too am here.' But he made no more answer than the rock. Then I lay down beside him, warding off the frost with my nice furry skin, and all night long he hung there silent. But when first a glimmer of white stole into the eastern sky, I spoke again: 'Son of Earth, I too am here, for a flame consumes me.' And at the word he moved, as the rock of Caucasus stirs beside the streams of ice. Then a voice came, low and proud: 'It was I brought flame to man, when before he was colder than dumb fishes.'

"Again he was silent, and as the white dawn slowly grew, I said: 'Son of Earth, a flame consumes me, seeing what injustice a god suffers at the hands of gods.'

"Then he answered: 'It was I brought flame to man, the flame for his hearth and his frozen hands. And as I bore it swiftly to earth the sparks kept streaming behind me like a comet's hair, and they mingled

with the shivering spirits of unborn men. Into their very hearts the fire entered, and was made one with their blood. There it smoulders for ever, and at a breath it kindles, nor can it ever be quenched, for it is passed on from life to life. In the soul of the men I loved, the fire is kindled which shall avenge me. At the blast of its fury the gods themselves shall wither, and long ages after they have shrivelled like beaten lead in the melting-pot, the fire of my gift shall glow and quicken in the heart of man, nor shall Ocean himself avail to quench it. They into whose blood one spark of it has entered shall never rest from their defiance. Titans of mankind, pity and wrath shall not suffer them to be at peace. At the breath of injustice they shall blaze into fury, so that before them the proclamations of heaven and earth shall shrink into nothingness, and statutes of stone be burnt like withered leaves. All the wealth and power of the world shall ally themselves with the thunders of the gods to tread them down, but defeated in every battle they shall never doubt of victory, for the conflict is their reward, and in the blood of their suffering

they shall win their desire. Lean and disquiet they shall be, and nothing shall tempt them from their wrath. No paradise of delight shall give them comfort, nor can their indignation be appeased by all the promises of heaven. Pinned and clamped immovably to the rocks of fate, scorched by derision, frozen by the indifferent stars, torn at heart by the winged ministers of power, they shall not temper their defiance, though the world were one chrysolite, to be theirs in exchange. For these are they who dare to be sad, and have the courage to mate with sorrow. Unobserved they shall toil in the fields or pass up and down the streets of cities, but their souls are wild as the desert where lions tread it only. Therefore let the gods send all the aviary of heaven to devour my heart, let them split my flesh with spikes of steel, or spurn me down the crags of the abyss to roll with earthquakes in the furnaces of hell — wherever that little spark shall glimmer in man's soul, there my avenger goes. O children of men, on whom I had pity, I charge you never suffer the flame of my indignation to die! In your soul from age to age it shall kindle, it shall

work. When most it seems to sleep, it shall but gather rage to blaze anew, giving you no peace till the fury of its wrath is satisfied, and consuming with its flickering tongue the fortresses where injustice like the injustice of the gods had thought to dwell everlastingly at ease behind its battlements.'

"So he spoke, and the sun's edge shot above the line of the sea, for day had come and the gods were at ease in heaven. Then I departed to tend my goats, and as I went I heard upon the air the rustling of terrible feathers, and a shadow of wings swooped over the reddening ground. That day my flocks went wandering far, for I paid them little heed, so hot a fire burned in my own heart, as though kindled by the breath of the son of Earth. From that time on how often it has blazed anew, driving me into the very trough of war, one of the queerest places for a shepherd! For though I am but an old god from the country, awe-struck and speechless before the glitter and threatening attitude of all military men, yet I have taken some part, as you know, in many battles, as on that far-off day when I walked

up and down the front at Marathon cleaving skulls with a ploughshare, so that the fatted ranks of wealth and slavery shivered before my rustic battle-axe."

He was silent for a time, and I could see his eyes gleaming with splendid memories. For now the filmy moon had crossed the top of heaven, and faced us from the west.

"Forgive the neighing of an old war-horse," he said, with a sudden smile. "Every one forgives that, and really it seems so long ago I can scarcely believe I am the same god. But it is still longer since the rage of the Titans was sent sprawling over the world, and the son of Earth was nailed to his cliff; and yet I suppose something less than two hundred pairs of lovers have sufficed to hand on life from that time down to you. Or even if the right number were four hundred, that would not be very many — not nearly half as many as the men lying dead on this hill to-night — and is it not pleasant to think of all the lovers dear who have been happy in conveying to you so charming a gift as life? To this poor peasant here it was conveyed in like manner, though by a more numerous

succession, for the generations of the poor are short. And with his blood they handed on that spark of Promethean fire, imparted with greater similitude than life itself. In the hearts of his creators it smouldered and glowed, till at last the flame was fanned and sped him on so that here he lies, blasted as by the thunderbolt of Zeus."

"Dear son," he said, pushing his fingers through the dead man's hair, "like me you loved the light and rain and the sheep upon the hills. You loved the ploughing ox and the ripening vines. You were happy eating and drinking, and one woman at least liked to have you near her. What was it so filled your soul with rage, that you counted all those things as nothing in the balance? Suddenly the fire grew hot, its smoke stifled your utterance, it gleamed in flame. To your fury it would have been a light task to have stormed the gates of heaven, so wild a blaze streamed along your blood. No gifts, no terms, no promises could twist you from your purpose; you could but kill or die. Nothing but death could hold you quiet, and now you are quiet indeed. Wonder fills me as I behold you, of so great a

passion was this small body the shrine. Consecrated by flame, your life was as the life of gods, and by the sacrificial fire of its indignation it has been consumed. See, then, in place of the purple robes of sepulchre, I button up your tattered shirt, and draw your sodden trousers straight. For the cærulean fillets of death, I lay your weathered and sweated cap upon your brows. For the winged sandals of Hermes, conductor of souls, I tie the laces of your heavy boots around your naked feet. And for the fee of death's river, upon your mouth I lay the kiss of reverence and awe."

The light of another day was now beginning to steal through the mist. Hungry and worn out, I lay back upon the stones, indifferent to whatever might befall, and I heard no more till there came a scraping of nailed boots upon rock and a murmur of low voices. Presently some one kicked me in the side, and cried out:

"Blest if he isn't one of us, and alive, too! And we were just going to bury him. I say, you there! What are you doing, nursing a dead enemy?"

"Oh, he's an enemy, is he?" I said,

getting up; "I had quite forgotten there was such a thing."

"He's gone clean off his head," said another. "Lend a hand to heave the body down." I took the peasant's arm, and three of the burying party held his other limbs, turning him over so that he might be the easier to carry. Then with a cry all together, we raised him up and bore him down the hill to where the dead were laid out in a row. His head nodded, face downwards, between his shoulders.

"Lift up a bit, or you'll knock him against the rocks," I said to the man who held the other arm.

"That won't do him much damage," was the reply, "but up he comes!"

The Bibelot

"I WILL *engrave my songs indelibly upon the heart of the world, so that no one can efface them.*" *Thus wrote, some seven centuries before the birth of the German poet*[1] *from whom these selections are made, a Hebrew poet, Solomon ben Judah Gabirol, of mediæval Spain; and to-day no more fitting words could be applied to the one great lyric artist whom modern Germany has produced. It is the misfortune of Heinrich Heine that this lyrical work of his is confessedly untranslatable.*[2]

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1 *Heinrich Heine was born Dec. 13, 1799, at Düsseldorf on the Rhine, and died in Paris, Feb. 17, 1856.*

2 *The only complete edition of Heine in English is the one published by Wm. Heinemann, 12 vols., crown 8vo., (London, 1891-1905) comprising vols. 1-8 (Prose) by Charles Godfrey Leland, and vols. 9-12 (Poems), with apparently some expurgations, by Thomas Brookbank and Margaret Armour. All sorts and conditions of other translations exist, of which those by Sir Theodore Martin and Edgar A. Bowring may be taken as the most respectable specimens of what cannot be called better than honest attempts in prosaic English. They are said to be popular; perhaps that will suffice! It is a regrettable fact that the one modern English poet who could have rendered Heine absolute justice, William Ernest*

It is also unfortunate that he has ever remained as caviar *to the minds of most of his English critics. Two of the best essays upon Heine are not without signs of deepest appreciation. One by George Eliot written as far back as 1856, the year of the poet's death, has an all-embracing sense of his world-sorrow as well as of his*

> *"Short swallow-flights of song that dip*
> *Their wings in tears, and skim away;"*

the other by Matthew Arnold, which appeared a few years later (Essays and Criticisms, *1865*), *is probably the best known of all. Unquestionably Arnold had a deep perception of Heine's relation to the spirit of his age, but his conclusion is essen-*

Henley, never did more than write a short note on The Villainy of Translation *and adduced as the proof of it Sir Theodore Martin's banalities! "In such a transcript as Sir Theodore's all this is lost: Heine becomes a mere prentice-metrist. . . . The poem disappears, and in its place you have an indifferent copy of verses. . . . The man is gone, and only an awkward, angular, clumsily articulated, entirely preposterous lay-figure remains to show that the translator has been by." The most* êntime *record of the poet's closing hours is given in a little book entitled* The Last Days of Heinrich Heine by Camille Selden. Translated into English by Clare Brune, (*London, 1884*). *William Sharp also wrote a* Life of Heinrich Heine, (*London, 1888*), *which, although brief, is of undoubted excellence.*

tially one that the writer was only too prone to make. "And what have we got from Heine? A half-result, for want of moral balance, and of nobleness of soul and character. That is what I say; there is so much power, so many seem able to run well, so many give promise of running well; — so few reach the goal, so few are chosen."

Well! that is an old and threadbare objection, not only to Heine but to almost every man of genius who has dared to live as well as think! Again, in Heine's Grave, *the great master of elegiac verse introduces another misapprehension which as a recent critic*[1] *has pointed out is the badge that probably most Englishmen attach to Heine:*

> *"But was it thou — I think*
> *Surely it was — that bard*
> *Unnamed, who, as Goethe said,*
> *Had every other gift, but wanted love;*
> *Love without which the tongue*
> *Even of angels sounds amiss?"*

Our own personal belief is, that to realize Heine as a poet of actual passionate experi-

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1 *"As a matter of fact 'that bard unnamed' has been named any time these thirty years, and the name we read is not Heine's, but Heine's bitterest enemy's — a man whom Heine literally put to death by his scorn." See* Books and Personalities *by H. W. Nevinson, (London, 1905, p. 1).*

ences, one must be something other than a middle-aged unmarried lady of however great ability, or an author, even, who will hold his own as a writer of impeccable prose and verse so long as English is a living language. What one needs above all for the appreciation of Heine's relations to life, to love, and to letters, is "the passionate bleeding heart" itself! If to this you add something of the poverty and illness which both poet and translator possessed as a common heritage you are, at least, in a position of insight wherefrom a true glimpse of Heine's human-hearted genius can be obtained. We therefore conceive that James Thomson[1] *was of all men most fitted by nature and environment to make,*

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[1] *As far back as 1881, Thomson had projected a book on Heine which came to nothing. His translations — little labours of love — had been made from time to time at much earlier dates. It is with Mr. Bertram Dobell's permission that we reprint these translations. Mr. Dobell informs us that he still retains a few unpublished lyrics "but they are far below the level of the published versions and so I should not like them to be printed." For a full account of Heine's influence upon the English poet see the* Life of James Thomson ("B. V."), *by H. S. Salt, octavo, (London, 1899). This influence is especially shown in Thomson's long poem entitled* Vane's Story, *which may also "be looked upon as the poet's autobiography and apologia when read with due discernment."*

as far forth as possible, a vital version of a handful of the many lyrics which Heine wrote.

In the arrangement of these translations we have thought it consistent with the harmony of things to add to what we call A Little Book of Songs *a* Proem *and* Epilogue *which those familiar with Thomson's admiration for Elizabeth Barrett Browning will surely welcome. One of the most beautiful poems in her memory is that beginning*

> *"Italy you hold in trust*
> *Very sacred English dust."*

We can only regret the inadequacy of space at our command in presenting these specimens out of the Book of Love, for it was *love even if in the shape of many experiments,—"mutable loves and loves perverse!"*

"In my wildest youth," said Heine, "I have not known a woman unless I was inspired by her beauty — that incarnate revelation of God — or by the true passion, that true passion which is also of divine origin, because it liberates us from all mean and selfish emotion, and drives us to sacrifice all the empty blessings of life, and even life itself for the beloved."

And so at last when Heine came to die it was neither as an apostate Hebrew nor as a converted Christian, but as a man who had loved much and who had suffered physically beyond all other poets of all other ages, and who now addressed himself to the great foe —in his case the great friend—with a philosophic detachment unequalled by more spectacular but far less heroic deaths. It is true "Heine passed as a drifting cloud: but his songs remain like stars in the heaven of poetry." It is also true, peradventure, that he had no faith. "A mattress grave," as he called the bed on which he lay, does not always conduce to a contrite heart; and some of his more stoical admirers may rejoice that we find no evidence of such yielding to the Aristophanes of Heaven. But he sleeps well even if his grave at Montmartre does not remind us "of the singing grave of the magician Merlin, which lies in the forest of Broceliand, in Brittany, under tall oaks whose tops soar like green flames toward heaven." And as a green flame the poet's songs rise forever into the infinite.

FOR JULY:

NOTES ON POEMS AND REVIEWS

BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE
By
JAMES THOMSON, ("B. V.").

HEINRICH HEINE.

This was a singer, a poet bold,
Compact of Fire and Rainbow Gold:
Compact of Rainbow Gold and of Fire,
Of sorrow and sin and of heart's desire—
Of good and of evil and things unknown,
A merciless poet who cut to the bone.

He sounded the depths of our grief and our gladness,
He laughed at our mirth and he wept at our madness;
He knew all the joy of the world, all the strife,
He knew, and he knew not, the meaning of life.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

I HOLD that while adequate translation of any long poem is impossible, some short poems may be adequately translated. In attempting to translate various short poems it is not wise to confine oneself throughout to any one system; some admit of almost literal translation, others may be reproduced faithfully as to the spirit, with free disregard of the letter. If a lover of poetry who is ignorant of the original does not care for the translation, the translation is certainly a failure, whether necessarily or by the incompetence of the translator. He, however skilful, who sets out to translate each and every poem of a long collection will assuredly do many of them badly. If each translator would attempt only his chief favourites in the collection, and of these only such as favour him beforehand with glimpses of a happy version, all the best pieces in the collection would get well translated in time. . . . From the well-chosen attempts of various translators, a really valuable anthology might be collected by a gardener who did not fear to engraft and prune and transplant. The system, based upon jealousy and selfishness, by which each translator must make the version of any piece wholly his own, even when fully conscious that some predecessor has given the best possible rendering of certain portions thereof, makes consummate translations far more rare than they ought to be. . . . I consider it a rule with very rare exceptions that a translation, to avoid utter failure, must conform to the metre of the original, and run stanza for stanza with it. A paraphrase or dilution of the original is worse than nothing at all, sacred to noodles, a graft from the "Tree of Knowledge" in the "Paradise of Fools."

JAMES THOMSON.

PROEM.

I.

Out of my own great woe
I make my little songs,
Which rustle their feathers in throngs
And beat on her heart even so.

II.

They found the way, for their part,
Yet come again, and complain:
Complain, and are not fain
To say what they saw in her heart.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.

For many thousand ages
The steadfast stars above
Have gazed upon each other
With ever-mournful love.

They speak a certain language,
So beautiful, so grand,
Which none of the philologians
Could ever understand.

But I have learned it, learned it
For ever, by the grace
Of studying one grammar,
My heart's own darling's face.

II.

In the Rhine, in the beautiful river
The mighty shadow is thrown
With its great cathedral,
Of holy and great Cologne.

One picture in the cathedral,
On gilded leather wrought,
Unto my life's wild sorrow
Hath gracious comfort brought:

The dear Madonna, with floating
Angels and flowers above;
The eyes and the lips and the contours
Are all just those of my love.

III.

The Lotus-flower doth languish
Beneath the sun's fierce light;
With drooping head she waiteth
All dreamily for night.

The Moon is her true lover,[1]
He wakes her with his glance:
To him she unveils gladly
Her gentle countenance.

She blooms and glows and brightens,
Intent on him above;
Exhaling, weeping, trembling,
With ever-yearning love.

IV.

THE world is dull, the world is blind,
And daily grows more silly!
It says of you, my lovely child,
You are not quite a lily.

The world is dull, the world is blind,
And judges in stupid fashion:
It knows not how sweet your kisses are,
And how they burn with passion.

V.

THE violets blue of the eyes divine,
And the rose of the cheeks as red as wine,
And the lilies white of the hands so fine,
They flourish and flourish from year to year,
And only the heart is withered and sere.

[1] In the German, Moon, *Der Mond*, is masculine; and Sun, *Die Sonne*, is feminine.

VI.

THE earth is so fair and the heaven so blue,
And the breeze is breathing so warmly too,
And the flowers of the meadow are gleaming through
The sparkling and glittering morning dew,
And the people are joyous wherever I view:
Yet would were I in the grave at rest
Folded close to my lost Love's breast.

VII.

I GAZED upon her picture,
Absorbed in dreams of gloom,
Till those belovèd features
Began to breathe and bloom.

About her lips came wreathing
That sweet, sweet smile I knew;
The eyes were softly gleaming
With tears as fresh as dew.

And my tears sprang then also,
The dark cloud's rain was shed:
And, O my Love, I cannot
Believe that thou art dead!

VIII.

A PINE-TREE standeth lonely
In the North on an upland bare;
It standeth whitely shrouded
With snow, and sleepeth there:

It dreameth of a palm-tree,
  Which far in the East alone
In mournful silence standeth
  On its ridge of burning stone.[1]

IX.

"SAY, where is the maiden sweet,
  Whom you once so sweetly sung,
When the flames of mighty heat
  Filled your heart and fired your tongue?"

Ah, those flames no longer burn;
  Cold and drear the heart that fed;
And this book is but the urn
  Of the ashes of love dead.

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[1] This lyric has probably been done into English more than any other of Heine's verses. A very beautiful version by Miss Bessie Craigmyle reads as follows:

"A Pine-tree standeth lonely
  On a far Norland height,
It slumbereth, while around it
  The snow falls thick and white.

"And of a Palm it dreameth,
  That, in a Southern land,
Lonely and silent standeth
  Amid the scorching sand."

X.

THE old dream comes again to me:
With May-night stars above,
We two sat under the linden-tree
And swore eternal love.

Again and again we plighted troth,
We chattered, and laughed, and kissed;
To make me well remember my oath
You gave me a bite in the wrist.

O darling with the eyes serene,
And with the teeth so white!
The vows were proper to the scene,
Superfluous was the bite.

XI.

MY darling, we sat together,
We two in our frail boat;
The night was calm o'er the wide sea
Whereon we were afloat.

The Spectre-Island, the lovely,
Lay dim in the moon's mild glance;
There sounded sweetest music,
There waved the shadowy dance.

It sounded sweeter and sweeter,
It waved there to and fro;
But we slid past forlornly
Upon the great sea-flow.

XII.

My heart, my heart is mournful,
Yet joyously shines the May;
I stand by the linden leaning,
High on the bastion grey.

The blue town-moat thereunder
Glides peacefully along;
A boy in a boat is angling
And whistling a careless song.

Beyond, like a well-known picture,
All small and fair are strewed
Houses and gardens and people,
Oxen and meadows and wood.

The maidens bleach the linen,
And dance in the grass for glee;
The mill-wheel scatters diamonds,
Its far hum reaches me.

Upon the hoary tower
A sentry-box stands low;
A youth in his coat of scarlet
There paces to and fro.

He trifles with his musket,
Which gleams in the sunshine red
He shoulders and presents it —
I would he shot me dead.

XIII.

As I each day in the morning
Pass by that house of thine,
It gives me joy, thou darling,
When you at the window shine.

Your dark brown eyes they ask me,
As only sweet eyes can:
Who art thou, and what ails thee,
Thou sickly foreign man?

I am a German poet,
Well known beyond the Rhine;
When men the best names mention,
Be sure they mention mine.

And what ails me, thou darling,
Ails many beyond the Rhine;
When men the worst woes mention,[1]
Be sure they mention mine.

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[1] Not the worst *instances* of woe; else this would be peculiar which he has just declared common: but the worst *kinds* of woe; thus claiming for his people unusual sensibility, or hinting that they are inordinately oppressed.

XIV.

You lovely fisher-maiden,
Bring now the boat to land:
Come here and sit beside me,
We 'll prattle hand in hand.

Your head lay on my bosom,
Nor be afraid of me:
Do you not trust all fearless
Daily the great wild sea?

My heart is like the sea, dear,
Has storm, and ebb, and flow,
And many purest pearl-gems
Within its dim depth glow.

XV.

The moon is fully risen,
And shineth over the sea;
And I embrace my darling,
Our hearts swell free.

In the arms of the lovely maiden
I lie alone on the strand:
"What sounds in the breeze's sighing?
Why trembles your white hand?"

"That is no breeze's sighing,
That is the mermaidens' song,
The singing of my sisters
Whom the sea hath drowned so long."

XVI.

WHERE shall once the wanderer weary
Meet his resting-place and shrine?
Under palm-trees by the Ganges?
Under lindens of the Rhine?

Shall I somewhere in the desert
Owe my grave to stranger hands?
Or upon some lonely sea-shore
Rest at last beneath the sands?

Ever onward! God's wide heaven
Must surround me there as here;
And like death-lamps o'er me swinging
Night by night the stars burn clear.

AD FINEM, FIFI!

THE *years they come and go,*
The races drop in the grave,
Yet never the love doth so
Which here in my heart I have.

Could I see thee but once, one day,
And sink down so on my knee,
And die in thy sight while I say,
"Lady, I love but thee!"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO KEVLAAR.

I.

At the window stood the mother,
In bed the sick son lay;
"Will you not get up, William,
And see them marching away?"

"I am so ill, O mother,
That I cannot hear or see!
I think of my dead Maggie,
And my heart is broken in me."

"Get up; we will to Kevlaar,
Take missal and rosarie;
The Mother of God our Saviour
Will heal thy heart for thee."

They wave the broad church-banners,
They chant the holy song;
And through Cologne on the Rhine stream,
The procession draws along.

The mother follows the pilgrims,
And her sick son leadeth she;
And their voices join in the chorale:
"Blessèd be thou, Marie!"

II.

The Mother of God at Kevlaar
To-day wears her richest dress;
To-day she will be right busy,
Such numbers come in distress.

And all the poor sick people
Bring with them offerings meet;
They are little waxen figures,
Many waxen hands and feet.

And who a wax hand offers,
His hand's wound hurts no more;
And who a wax foot offers,
His foot is healed of its sore.

To Kevlaar went many on crutches,
Who now can dance all night;
And many now play on the viol
Whose fingers were helpless quite.

The mother took a wax-light,
And thereout shaped a heart:
"Take that to our dear Lord's Mother,
And she will cure thy smart."

Sighing he took the wax heart
And knelt to the holy form;
The tears from his eyes outstreaming,
And the words from his heart blood-warm:

"Thou blessèd among women,
God's Virgin pure from taint,
Thou Queen of the highest Heaven,
To thee I bring my plaint!

"I lived with my dear mother
In the city of Cologne,
The city for many hundreds
Of churches and chapels known.

"And next to us lived Maggie,
She lived, she lives not now:
Marie, I bring thee a wax heart,
My bleeding heart heal thou!

"Heal thou my heart sore wounded,
And early and late to thee
Will I sing and play with fervour
Blessèd be thou, Marie!"

III.

The sick son and his mother
Were sleeping from all ill,
When lo, the Mother of Jesus
Came gliding in so still.

She bent down over the sick one,
And softly laid her hand
Upon his heart; then vanished
Smiling sweet and bland.

The mother saw all in her dreaming,
And fain had seen yet more;
But she was roused from slumber,
The dogs made such uproar.

There lay outstretched beside her
Her son, and he was dead;
On the pallid features sparkled
The light of the morning red.

The mother folded her hands then,
She felt so wistfully;
Devoutly sang she softly:
"Blessèd be thou, Marie!"

THE LORELEY.

I KNOW not what evil is coming,
  But my heart feels sad and cold;
A song in my head keeps humming,
  A tale from the times of old.

The air is fresh and it darkles,
  And smoothly flows the Rhine;
The peak of the mountain sparkles
  In the fading sunset-shine.

The loveliest wonderful Maiden
  On high is sitting there,
With golden jewels braiden,
  And she combs her golden hair.

With a golden comb sits combing,
  And ever the while sings she
A marvellous song through the gloaming
  Of magical melody.

It hath caught the boatman, and bound him
  In the spell of a wild sad love;
He sees not the rocks around him,
  He sees only her above.

The waves through the pass sweep swinging,
  But boatman or boat is none;
And this with her mighty singing
  The LORELEY hath done.

THE MOUNTAIN VOICE.

ALL sadly through the stern ravine
There rode a horseman brave:
"Ah! draw I near to my darling's arms,
Or near to the gloomy grave?"
The echo answer gave:
"To the gloomy grave!"

And as the horseman onward rode
A deep sigh heaved his breast:
"If I thus early go to the grave,
Well, in the grave is rest!"
The answering voice confessed:
"In the grave is rest!"

Slowly adown the rider's cheek
A tear of sad thought fell:
"If but in the grave there is rest for me,
For me in the grave 'tis well!"
Whereto the echoing knell:
"In the grave 'tis well!"

QUESTIONS.

By the sea, by the desert midnight sea,
Stands a youth,
His heart full of anguish, his head full of doubt,
And with sullen lips he questions the waves: —

"Oh, solve to me the Riddle of Life,
The painful primordial riddle,
Which already has racked so many heads,
Heads in hieroglyphic caps,
Heads in turbans and black berrets,
Heads in wigs, and myriad other
Poor perspiring human heads;
What is the meaning of Man?
Whence comes he? Whither goes he?
Who dwells there above in the golden stars?"

The waves murmur their everlasting murmur,
The wind sweeps, the clouds scud,
The stars glitter indifferent and cold,
And a fool awaits an answer.

CHILDHOOD.

(*To his Sister.*)

My child, we both were children,
And merry days we saw,
We used to creep into the fowl-house
And hide there under the straw.

And then we set up a crowing;
The people who passed on the road—
Cock-a-doodle-doo!—they thought it
Was really a cock that crowed.

The cases that lay in our courtyard,
We fitted them up with care;
And made a magnificent mansion,
And lived together there.

And the cat of our next-door neighbour
Came to visit us too;
We gave our best bows and courtseys
With compliments fine and new.

As to her health we asked her,
With friendly and earnest air;
Many old cats have we since asked
The like with the like deep care.

And often we sat discussing,
  As if we were old and grey;
Bemoaning how things were better,
  Better indeed, in our day.

How Love, Truth, Faith had vanished,
  And left the world all bad;
How the price of coffee was shameful,
  And money was not to be had! . . .

Past, past, are the sports of our childhood,
  And all rolls past in sooth, —
The World, and Time, and Money,
  And Faith, and Love, and Truth.

THE GREEK GODS.[1]

FULL-ORBED Moon! Beneath thy light
Like molten gold far shines the sea;
With noonday clearness twilight-enchanted
It overflows the broad level strand;
And above in the clear blue starless Heaven
I see white clouds,
Like colossal God-forms
Of shining marble.

No, never, they are not clouds!
They are indeed the Gods of Hellas,
Who once so joyously ruled the world;
But now, dethroned and desolate,
Enormous phantoms, wander
Through the midnight Heaven.

Astonished and dazed I watched
The aërial Pantheon,
The solemn, dumb, mysterious procession
Of giant shapes.
He there is Kronion, the King of Heaven;
Snow-white are the locks of his head,
The renowned Olympus-shaking locks.

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[1] Thomson did two versions of this fine but unmetrical poem, at different times, and apparently without comparison. Each version is in some places closer than the other.

He holds in his hand the quencht thunderbolts,
In his countenance is misery and grief,
And yet evermore the ancient pride.
Ah, they were better times, O Zeus,
When thou divinely enjoyedst thy lust
With youths and nymphs and hecatombs —
But even the gods reign not for ever,
The young vanquish the old, —
As thou once wert allowed to vanquish
The hoary father and thy Titanic kindred,
Jupiter Parricida!

Thee too I recognise, haughty Juno,
In spite of all thy vigilant anxiety
Another has grasped the sceptre,
And thou art no more the Queen of Heaven,
And thy large eyes are beamless,
And thy pure white arms have no strength;
And never more shall thy vengeance smite
The God-embraced damsel,
And the God's irresistible Son.
Thee too I recognise, Pallas Athene!
With thine Ægis and thy wisdom could'st thou not
Avert the destruction of the Gods?
And thee also know I, thee also, Aphrodite,
Once the golden, now the silvern!
Still thou art adorned with the love-charm of thy cestus,
And I yearn with compassion for thy beauty,

And could'st thou give me but one embrace,
Like other heroes, I might pine to death:
As the corpse of a goddess appearest thou to me,
Venus Libitina!
No more with love burns towards thee
The gaze of the terrible Ares.
And, oh, how sad looks Phœbus Apollo,
The ever young! His lyre is silent,
That thrilled such joy thro' ambrosial feasts.
And even sadder looks Hephaistos,
And verily, poor Cripple! nevermore
Shall he stumble above there in his office —
Busily pouring out the divine nectar;
And long, long, has been utterly extinguished
The inextinguishable laughter of the Gods.

I have never loved you, O ye Gods!
For not at all to my mind are the Greeks,
And the Romans I thoroughly hate;
Yet pious compassion and sorrowful sympathy
Possess my heart,
When I see you now above there
Desolate deities,
Dead, night-wandering shadows,
Frail clouds, driven by the wind, —
And when I think how mean and blatant
The Gods are who have overcome you,
The new, dominant, melancholy Gods,

So malignant in their sheep's clothing of humility —
O then seizes me a gloomy rage,
And I could shatter the new temple,
And fight for you, you ancient Gods,
For you and your joyous ambrosial sway,
And before your high altars
Broad-built and steaming with sacrifices,
I could even kneel and pray
And suppliant arms uplift.
Though always aforetime, O ye Gods,
In the battles and dissensions of men,
Ye have fought on the side of the strongest;
Yet man is more magnanimous than you,
And in the battle of the Gods I range myself
With the followers of the vanquished Gods.

(*Another Version.*)

FULL-BLOSSOMED Moon! Beneath thy light
Liquidly golden outshines the sea;
Noonday clearness with twilight glamour,
It overflows the broad level strand;
And in the clear blue starless heaven
Float the white clouds,
Like colossal God statues
Of purest marble.

No, never, no, these are not clouds!
They are themselves the very Gods of Hellas,
Who once so joyously ruled the world;
But now disinherited and slain,
Wander, enormous phantoms,
The waste of the midnight heaven.
Astonished and dazed, I behold
The aërial Pantheon,
The solemnly dumb, terribly advancing
Gigantic forms.
He there is Kronion, the King of Heaven,
Snow-white are the locks of his head,
The locks at whose shaking Olympus shook.
His hand still grasps the quenched thunderbolt,
In his countenance woe and sorrow,

And yet evermore the ancient pride.
Those were better times, O Zeus,
When you divinely delighted
In boys and nymphs and hecatombs;
But even the Gods do not rule for ever,
The young supplant the old,
As you yourself supplanted
Hoary sire and Titan-uncles,
Jupiter Parricida!
Thee also I recognise, proud Hêrê!
Maugre all thy jealous anxiety
Another has won the Sceptre,
And thou art no more the Queen of Heaven;
And thy large eyes are quenched,
And thy white arms are powerless,
And nevermore shall thy vengeance smite
The God-caressed damsel,
And the labour-conquering Son of the God.
Thee also I know, Pallas Athênê!
With thy shield and thy wisdom couldst thou not
Avert the catastrophe of the Gods?
Thee also I know, thee also, Aphrodite,
Once the golden, now the silvern!
Still adorns thee the love-compelling girdle,
And in secret I have terror of thy beauty;
And could thy liberal body bless me,
Like other heroes I should die with anguish —
As Goddess of the Dead appearest thou to me
Venus Libitina!

No more with love gazes toward thee
There the terrible Ares.
How mournfully regardeth Phœbus Apollo,
The Youth ever young; silent his lyre
Which so joyously rang at the feast of the Gods.
Yet more miserable looks Hephaistos,
And truly, the Lameter, nevermore
Will he take Hêbê's office,
And pour, busy in the assemblage,
The sweet nectar. And long has been extinguished
The inextinguishable laughter of the Gods.

I have never loved you, O ye Gods!
For not at all to my mind are the Greeks,
And the Romans I thoroughly hate;
Yet holy compassion and shuddering sympathy
Stream through my heart,
When I see you now there above,
Desolate Gods,
Dead, night-wandering Shadows,
Frail clouds driven by the wind;
And when I reflect how dastardly, how windy
Are the Gods who vanquished you,
The new-reigning melancholy Gods,
The malignants in sheep's-clothing of humility,
Oh then I am seized with a sombre rage,
And would tear down the new Temples,
And fight for you, ye older Gods,

For you and your good ambrosial sway;
And at your high altars
The re-erected, smoking with sacrifice,
I could even myself kneel and pray,
And supplicating arms uplift.
I know right well, ye ancient Gods,
That always of old in the strifes of men
Ye have held with the party of the victors;
But Man is more magnanimous than you,
And in the Battle of the Gods I hold
With the party of the conquered Gods.

* * * * *

So I spake, and visibly thereover
Blushed the pallid cloudy forms,
And regarded me as regard the Dying,
Pain-transfigured, and suddenly vanished;
Even then hid the Moon
Behind clouds darkly advancing;
High resounded the sea,
And triumphantly came forth into heaven
The eternal Stars.

EPILOGUE.

As in the fields grow wheatears,
So grow and wave in the human mind
Thoughts.
But the delicate thoughts of Love
Are the joyous therein-between-blooming
Red and blue Flowers.

Red and blue Flowers!
The sulky reaper casts you away as useless,
Wooden flails thresh you in scorn,
Even the penniless wanderer
Whom sight of you pleases and refreshes,
Shakes his head
And calls you useless weeds.
But the country maiden,
The garland-wreather,
Honours you and plucks you,
And adorns with you her beautiful locks,
And thus adorned speeds to the dance-place,
Or to the silent beech-tree,
Where the voice of the dearest yet sweeter sounds
Than pipes and rebecks.

The Bibelot

IN 1904 *the first collected edition of* Swinburne's Poems *appeared in London in six volumes, and in the dedicatory epistle to Theodore Watts-Dunton the poet had this to say:* "*It is now thirty-six years since my first volume of miscellaneous verse, lyrical and dramatic and elegiac and generally heterogeneous, had as quaint a reception and as singular a fortune as I have ever heard or read of. I do not think you will differ from my opinion that what is best in it cannot be divided from what is not so good by any other line of division than that which marks off mature from immature execution — in other words, complete from incomplete conception. For its author the most amusing and satisfying result of the clatter aroused by it was the deep diversion of collating and comparing the variously inaccurate verdicts of the scornful or mournful censors who insisted on regarding all the studies of passion or sensation attempted or achieved in it as either confessions of positive fact or excursions of absolute fancy. There are photographs from life in the book; and there are sketches from imagination. Some which keen-sighted criticism*

has dismissed with a smile as ideal or imaginary were as real and actual as they well could be: others which have been taken for obvious transcripts from memory were utterly fantastic or dramatic. If the two kinds cannot be distinguished, it is surely rather a credit than a discredit to an artist whose medium or material has more in common with a musician's than with a sculptor's. Friendly and kindly critics, English and foreign, have detected ignorance of the subject in poems taken straight from the life, and have protested that they could not believe me were I to swear that poems entirely or mainly fanciful were not faithful expressions or transcriptions of the writer's actual experience and personal emotion. But I need not remind you that all I have to say about this book was said once for all in the year of its publication: I have nothing to add to my notes then taken, and I have nothing to retract from them."

The Notes on Poems and Reviews *is, however, something more than a mere bibliographical curiosity.*[1] *It is true the*

[1] Notes on Poems and / Reviews. / By / Algernon Charles Swinburne. / London: / John Camden Hotten, Piccadilly. / 1866. *Octavo, pp. 24. Issued stitched, and without wrappers.*

The publisher, Hotten, pirated his own edition so

poet never saw fit to reprint it, but a recent critic, Prof. Oliver Elton, in his Modern Studies (*London, 1907,*) *has pointed out "that many of Mr. Swinburne's earlier pieces remain, to adapt a phrase of Poe's, not only poems of obscure emotion, but obscure poems of emotion, and the* Note *upon* Dolores, Hesperia, *and the rest, ought all the more to be now republished, if only as a prose poem in its own right."*

Perhaps nothing further is required as a reason why we restore to the republic of letters what has so long been denied it. The great Victorian poet who so recently passed away found in his death, if not in his life, a downpour of appreciation such as he would doubtless have scorned: much of it mere copy for the occasion, but some of it born of profound feeling and the lasting impressions of youth. To those of us especially who grew up with the Poems and Ballads *it would be a difficult task to set definite measure to our sense of their abid-*

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that a second, of which the number issued is unknown, came into the market and remained on sale until 1895. Carleton, of New York, made a reprint of the Notes *in 1866 which was distributed gratuitously. (12mo, without wrapper, stitched, pp. 24.) We have also prefixed the text of the* Notes *to our quarto edition of* Laus Veneris: Poems and Ballads (*1899*). *Other than these reissues we are unaware.*

ing beauty, "which is not of to-day or yesterday." Hence this Apologia *written and let fall without apparent care to rescue it from the format and fate of a mere pamphlet remains the matchless music that it is; fitting postlude to the still deeper music infusing that earlier* Defence *which Shelley gave to the world in his own unheeding day and generation.*

FOR AUGUST:

GEORGE MEREDITH: AN APPRECIATION
BY OLIVER ELTON.

NOTES ON POEMS AND REVIEWS
By
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

IT is by no wish of my own that I accept the task now proposed to me. To vindicate or defend myself from the assault or the charge of men whom, but for their attacks, I might never have heard of, is an office which I, or any writer who respects his work, cannot without reluctance stoop to undertake. As long as the attacks on my book — I have seen a few, I am told there are many — were confined within the usual limits of the anonymous press, I let them pass without the notice to which they appeared to aspire. Sincere or insincere, insolent or respectful, I let my assailants say out their say unheeded.

I have now undertaken to write a few words on this affair, not by way of apology or vindication, of answer or appeal. I have none such to offer. Much of the criticism I have seen is as usual, in the words of Shakspeare's greatest follower,

> "As if a man should spit against the wind;
> The filth returns in 's face."

In recognition of his fair dealing with me in this matter, I am bound by my own sense of right to accede to the wish of my present

publisher, and to the wishes of friends whose advice I value, that on his account, if not on mine, I should make some reply to the charges brought against me — as far as I understand them. The work is not fruitful of pleasure, of honour, or of profit; but, like other such tasks, it may be none the less useful and necessary. I am aware that it cannot be accomplished without some show of egotism; and I am perforce prepared to incur the consequent charge of arrogance. The office of commentator of my own works has been forced upon me by circumstances connected with the issue and re-issue of my last book. I am compelled to look sharply into it, and inquire what passage, what allusion, or what phrase can have drawn down such sudden thunder from the serene heavens of public virtue. A mere libeller I have no wish to encounter; I leave it to saints to fight with beasts at Ephesus or nearer. "For in these strifes, and on such persons, it were as wretched to affect a victory, as it is unhappy to be committed with them."

Certain poems of mine, it appears, have been impugned by judges, with or without

a name, as indecent or as blasphemous. To me, as I have intimated, their verdict is a matter of infinite indifference: it is of equally small moment to me whether in such eyes as theirs I appear moral or immoral, Christian or pagan. But, remembering that science must not scorn to investigate animalcules and infusoria, I am ready for once to play the anatomist.

With regard to any opinion implied or expressed throughout my book, I desire that one thing should be remembered: the book is dramatic, many-faced, multifarious; and no utterance of enjoyment or despair, belief or unbelief, can properly be assumed as the assertion of its author's personal feeling or faith. Were each poem to be accepted as the deliberate outcome and result of the writer's conviction, not mine alone but most other men's verses would leave nothing behind them but a sense of cloudy chaos and suicidal contradiction. Byron and Shelley, speaking in their own persons, and with what sublime effect we know, openly and insultingly mocked and reviled what the English of their day held most sacred. I have not done this. I do

not say that, if I chose, I would not do so to the best of my power; I do say that hitherto I have seen fit to do nothing of the kind.

It remains then to inquire what in that book can be reasonably offensive to the English reader. In order to resolve this problem, I will not fish up any of the ephemeral scurrilities born only to sting if they can, and sink as they must. I will take the one article that lies before me; the work (I admit) of an enemy, but the work (I acknowledge) of a gentleman. I cannot accept it as accurate; but I readily and gladly allow that it neither contains nor suggests anything false or filthy. To him therefore, rather than to another, I address my reclamation. Two among my poems, it appears, are in his opinion "especially horrible." Good. Though the phrase be somewhat "inexpressive," I am content to meet him on this ground. It is something — nay, it is much — to find an antagonist who has a sufficient sense of honesty and honour to mark out the lists in which he, the challenger, is desirous to encounter the challenged.

The first, it appears, of these especially horrible poems is *Anactoria*. I am informed, and have not cared to verify the assertion, that this poem has excited, among the chaste and candid critics of the day or hour or minute, a more vehement reprobation, a more virtuous horror, a more passionate appeal, than any other of my writing. Proud and glad as I must be of this distinction, I must yet, however reluctantly, inquire what merit or demerit has incurred such unexpected honour. I was not ambitious of it; I am not ashamed of it; but I am overcome by it. I have never lusted after the praise of reviewers; I have never feared their abuse; but I would fain know why the vultures should gather here of all places; what congenial carrion they smell, who can discern such (it is alleged) in any rosebed. And after a little reflection I do know, or conjecture. Virtue, as she appears incarnate in British journalism and voluble through that unsavoury organ, is something of a compound creature —

> "A lump neither alive nor dead,
> Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed;"

nor have any dragon's jaws been known to emit on occasion stronger and stranger sounds and odours. But having, not without astonishment and disgust, inhaled these odours, I find myself at last able to analyse their component parts. What my poem means, if any reader should want that explained, I am ready to explain, though perplexed by the hint that explanation may be required. What certain reviewers have imagined it to imply, I am incompetent to explain, and unwilling to imagine. I am evidently not virtuous enough to understand them. I thank Heaven that I am not. *Ma corruption rougirait de leur pudeur.* I have not studied in those schools whence that full-fledged phœnix, the "virtue" of professional pressmen, rises chuckling and crowing from the dunghill, its birthplace and its deathbed. But there are birds of alien feather, if not of higher flight; and these I would now recall into no hencoop or preserve of mine, but into the open and general field where all may find pasture and sunshine and fresh air: into places whither the prurient prudery and the virulent virtue of pressmen and prostitutes cannot follow;

into an atmosphere where calumny cannot speak, and fatuity cannot breathe; in a word, where backbiters and imbeciles become impossible. I neither hope nor wish to change the unchangeable, to purify the impure. To conciliate them, to vindicate myself in their eyes, is a task which I should not condescend to attempt, even were I sure to accomplish.

In this poem I have simply expressed, or tried to express, that violence of affection between one and another which hardens into rage and deepens into despair. The key-note which I have here touched was struck long since by Sappho. We in England are taught, are compelled under penalties to learn, to construe, and to repeat, as schoolboys, the imperishable and incomparable verses of that supreme poet; and I at least am grateful for the training. I have wished, and I have even ventured to hope, that I might be in time competent to translate into a baser and later language the divine words which even when a boy I could not but recognise as divine. That hope, if indeed I dared ever entertain such a hope, I soon found fallacious. To translate

the two odes and the remaining fragments of Sappho is the one impossible task; and as witness of this I will call up one of the greatest among poets. Catullus "translated" — or as his countrymen would now say "traduced" — the Ode to Anactoria — Εἰς Ἐρωμέναν: a more beautiful translation there never was and will never be; but compared with the Greek, it is colourless and bloodless, puffed out by additions and enfeebled by alterations. Let any one set against each other the two first stanzas, Latin and Greek, and pronounce. (This would be too much to ask of all of my critics; but some among the journalists of England may be capable of achieving the not exorbitant task.) Where Catullus failed I could not hope to succeed; I tried instead to reproduce in a diluted and dilated form the spirit of a poem which could not be reproduced in the body.

Now, the ode Εἰς Ἐρωμέναν — the "Ode to Anactoria" (as it is named by tradition) — the poem which English boys have to get by heart — the poem (and this is more important) which has in the whole world of verse no companion and no rival but the

Ode to Aphrodite, has been twice at least translated or "traduced." I am not aware that Mr. Ambrose Phillips, or M. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, was ever impeached before any jury of moralists for his sufficiently grievous offence. By any jury of poets both would assuredly have been convicted. Now, what they did I have not done. To the best (and bad is the best) of their ability, they have "done into" bad French and bad English the very words of Sappho. Feeling that although I might do it better I could not do it well, I abandoned the idea of translation — *ἔκων ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ*. I tried, then, to write some paraphrase of the fragment which the Fates and the Christians have spared us. I have not said, as Boileau and Phillips have, that the speaker sweats and swoons at sight of her favourite by the side of a man. I have abstained from touching on such details, for this reason: that I felt myself incompetent to give adequate expression in English to the literal and absolute words of Sappho; and would not debase and degrade them into a viler form. No one can feel more deeply than I do the inadequacy of my

work. "That is not Sappho," a friend said once to me. I could only reply, "It is as near as I can come; and no man can come close to her." Her remaining verses are the supreme success, the final achievement, of the poetic art.

But this, it may be, is not to the point. I will try to draw thither; though the descent is immeasurable from Sappho's verse to mine, or to any man's. I have striven to cast my spirit into the mould of hers, to express and represent not the poem but the poet. I did not think it requisite to disfigure the page with a foot-note wherever I had fallen back upon the original text. Here and there, I need not say, I have rendered into English the very words of Sappho. I have tried also to work into words of my own some expression of their effect: to bear witness how, more than any other's, her verses strike and sting the memory in lonely places, or at sea, among all loftier sights and sounds — how they seem akin to fire and air, being themselves "all air and fire;" other element there is none in them. As to the angry appeal against the supreme mystery of oppressive

heaven, which I have ventured to put into her mouth at that point only where pleasure culminates in pain, affection in anger, and desire in despair — as to the "blasphemies"[1] against God or Gods of which here and elsewhere I stand accused, — they are to be taken as the first outcome or outburst of foiled and fruitless passion recoiling on itself. After this, the spirit finds time to

[1] As I shall not return to this charge of "blasphemy," I will here cite a notable instance of what does seem permissible in that line to the English reader. (I need not say that I do not question the right, which hypocrisy and servility would deny, of author and publisher to express and produce what they please. I do not deprecate, but demand for all men freedom to speak and freedom to hear. It is the line of demarcation which admits, if offence there be, the greater offender and rejects the less — it is this that I do not understand.) After many alternate curses and denials of God, a great poet talks of Christ "veiling his horrible Godhead," of his "malignant soul," his "godlike malice." Shelley outlived all this and much more; but Shelley wrote all this and much more. Will no Society for the Suppression of Common Sense — no Committee for the Propagation of Cant — see to it a little? or have they not already tried their hands at it and broken down? For the poem which contains the words above quoted continues at this day to bring credit and profit to its publishers — Messrs. Moxon and Co.

breathe and repose above all vexed senses of the weary body, all bitter labours of the revolted soul; the poet's pride of place is resumed, the lofty conscience of invincible immortality in the memories and the mouths of men.

What is there now of horrible in this? the expressions of fierce fondness, the ardours of passionate despair? Are these so unnatural as to affright or disgust? Where is there an unclean detail? where an obscene allusion? A writer as impure as my critics might of course have written, on this or on any subject, an impure poem; I have not. And if to translate or paraphrase Sappho be an offence, indict the heavier offenders who have handled and rehandled this matter in their wretched versions of the ode. Is my poem more passionate in detail, more unmistakable in subject? I affirm that it is less; and what I affirm I have proved.

Next on the list of accusation stands the poem of *Dolores*. The gist and bearing of this I should have thought evident enough, viewed by the light of others which precede and follow it. I have striven here to express that transient state of spirit through which

a man may be supposed to pass, foiled in love and weary of loving, but not yet in sight of rest; seeking refuge in those "violent delights" which "have violent ends," in fierce and frank sensualities which at least profess to be no more than they are. This poem, like *Faustine*, is so distinctly symbolic and fanciful that it cannot justly be amenable to judgment as a study in the school of realism. The spirit, bowed and discoloured by suffering and by passion (which are indeed the same thing and the same word), plays for awhile with its pleasures and its pains, mixes and distorts them with a sense half-humorous and half-mournful, exults in bitter and doubtful emotions —

"Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth."

It sports with sorrow, and jests against itself; cries out for freedom and confesses the chain; decorates with the name of goddess, crowns anew as the mystical Cotytto, some woman, real or ideal, in whom the pride of life with its companion lusts is incarnate. In her lover's half-shut eyes, her fierce unchaste beauty is transfigured, her

cruel sensual eyes have a meaning and a message; there are memories and secrets in the kisses of her lips. She is the darker Venus, fed with burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice; the veiled image of that pleasure which men impelled by satiety and perverted by power have sought through ways as strange as Nero's before and since his time; the daughter of lust and death, and holding of both her parents; Our Lady of Pain, antagonist alike of trivial sins and virtues: no Virgin, and unblessed of men; no mother of the Gods or God; no Cybele, served by sexless priests or monks, adored of Origen or of Atys; no likeness of her in Dindymus or Loreto.

The next act in this lyrical monodrame of passion represents a new stage and scene. The worship of desire has ceased; the mad commotion of sense has stormed itself out; the spirit, clear of the old regret that drove it upon such violent ways for a respite, healed of the fever that wasted it in the search for relief among fierce fancies and tempestuous pleasures, dreams now of truth discovered and repose attained. Not the martyr's ardour of selfless love, an unprofit-

able flame that burnt out and did no service — not the rapid rage of pleasure that seemed for a little to make the flesh divine, to clothe the naked senses with the fiery raiment of faith; but a stingless love, an innocuous desire. "Hesperia," the tenderest type of woman or of dream, born in the westward "islands of the blest," where the shadows of all happy and holy things live beyond the sunset a sacred and a sleepless life, dawns upon his eyes a western dawn, risen as the fiery day of passion goes down, and risen where it sank. Here, between moonrise and sunset, lives the love that is gentle and faithful, neither giving too much nor asking — a bride rather than a mistress, a sister rather than a bride. But not at once, or not for ever, can the past be killed and buried; hither also the huntress follows her flying prey, wounded and weakened, still fresh from the fangs of passion; the cruel hands, the amorous eyes, still glitter and allure. *Qui a bu boira:* the feet are drawn back towards the ancient ways. Only by lifelong flight, side by side with the goddess that redeems, shall her slave of old escape from the goddess that consumes: if even thus

one may be saved, even thus distance the bloodhounds.

This is the myth or fable of my poem; and it is not without design that I have slipped in, between the first and the second part, the verses called *The Garden of Proserpine*, expressive, as I meant they should be, of that brief total pause of passion and of thought, when the spirit, without fear or hope of good things or evil, hungers and thirsts only after the perfect sleep. Now, what there is in all this unfit to be written — what there is here indecent in manner or repulsive in matter — I at least do not yet see; and before I can see it, my eyes must be purged with the euphrasy and rue which keep clear the purer eyes of professional virtue. The insight into evil of chaste and critical pressmen, their sharp scent for possible or impossible impurities, their delicate ear for a sound or a whisper of wrong — all this knowledge "is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it." In one thing, indeed, it seems I have erred: I have forgotten to prefix to my work the timely warning of a great poet and humorist: —

> " J'en préviens les mères des familles,
> Ce que j'écris n'est pas pour les petites filles
> Dont on coupe le pain en tartines ; mes vers
> Sont des vers de jeune homme."

I have overlooked the evidence which every day makes clearer, that our time has room only for such as are content to write for children and girls. But this oversight is the sum of my offence.

It would seem indeed as though to publish a book were equivalent to thrusting it with violence into the hands of every mother and nurse in the kingdom as fit and necessary food for female infancy. Happily there is no fear that the supply of milk for babes will fall short of the demand for some time yet. There are moral milkmen enough, in all conscience, crying their ware about the streets and by-ways; fresh or stale, sour or sweet, the requisite fluid runs from a sufficiently copious issue. In due time, perhaps, the critical doctors may prescribe a stronger diet for their hypochondriac patient, the reading world; or the gigantic *malade imaginaire* called the public may rebel against the weekly draught or the daily drug of MM. Purgon and Diafoirus. We, mean-

while, who profess to deal neither in poison nor in pap, may not unwillingly stand aside. Let those read who will, and let those who will abstain from reading. *Caveat emptor.* No one wishes to force men's food down the throats of babes and sucklings. The verses last analysed were assuredly written with no moral or immoral design; but the upshot seems to me moral rather than immoral, if it must needs be one or the other, and if (which I cannot be sure of) I construe aright those somewhat misty and changeable terms.

These poems thus disposed of are (I am told) those which have given most offence and scandal to the venal virtue of journalism. As I have not to review my reviewers, I need not be at pains to refute at length every wilful error or unconscious lie which a workman that way inclined might drag into light. To me, as to all others who may read what I write, the whole matter must continue to seem too pitiable and trivial to waste a word or thought on it which we can help wasting. But having begun this task, I will add yet a word or two of annotation. I have heard that even the little poem of

Faustine has been to some readers a thing to make the scalp creep and the blood freeze. It was issued with no such intent. Nor do I remember that any man's voice or heel was lifted against it when it first appeared, a new-born and virgin poem, in the *Spectator* newspaper for 1862. Virtue, it would seem, has shot up surprisingly in the space of four years or less — a rank and rapid growth, barren of blossom and rotten at root. *Faustine* is the reverie of a man gazing on the bitter and vicious loveliness of a face as common and as cheap as the morality of reviewers, and dreaming of past lives in which this fair face may have held a nobler or fitter station; the imperial profile may have been Faustina's, the thirsty lips a Mænad's, when first she learnt to drink blood or wine, to waste the loves and ruin the lives of men; through Greece and again through Rome she may have passed with the same face which now comes before us dishonoured and discrowned. Whatever of merit or demerit there may be in the verses, the idea that gives them such life as they have is simple enough; the transmigration of a single soul, doomed as though by

accident from the first to all evil and no good, through many ages and forms, but clad always in the same type of fleshly beauty. The chance which suggested to me this poem was one which may happen any day to any man — the sudden sight of a living face which recalled the well-known likeness of another dead for centuries: in this instance, the noble and faultless type of the elder Faustina, as seen in coin and bust. Out of that casual glimpse and sudden recollection these verses sprang and grew.

Of the poem in which I have attempted once more to embody the legend of Venus and her knight, I need say only that my first aim was to rehandle the old story in a new fashion. To me it seemed that the tragedy began with the knight's return to Venus — began at the point where hitherto it had seemed to leave off. The immortal agony of a man lost after all repentance — cast down from fearful hope into fearless despair — believing in Christ and bound to Venus — desirous of penitential pain, and damned to joyless pleasure — this, in my eyes, was the kernel and nucleus of a myth comparable only to that of the foolish virgins and bear-

ing the same burden. The tragic touch of the story is this: that the knight who has renounced Christ believes in him; the lover who has embraced Venus disbelieves in her. Vainly and in despair would he make the best of that which is the worst — vainly remonstrate with God, and argue on the side he would fain desert. Once accept or admit the least admixture of pagan worship, or of modern thought, and the whole story collapses into froth and smoke. It was not till my poem was completed that I received from the hands of its author the admirable pamphlet of Charles Baudelaire on Wagner's *Tannhaüser*. If any one desires to see, expressed in better words than I can command, the conception of the mediæval Venus which it was my aim to put into verse, let him turn to the magnificent passage in which M. Baudelaire describes the fallen goddess, grown diabolic among ages that would not accept her as divine. In another point, as I then found, I concur with the great musician and his great panegyrist. I have made Venus the one love of her knight's whole life, as Mary Stuart of Chastelard's; I have sent him, poet and

soldier, fresh to her fierce embrace. Thus only both legend and symbol appear to me noble and significant. Light loves and harmless errors must not touch the elect of heaven or of hell. The queen of evil, the lady of lust, will endure no rival but God; and when the vicar of God rejects him, to her only can he return to abide the day of his judgment in weariness and sorrow and fear.

These poems do not seem to me condemnable, unless it be on the ground of bad verse; and to any charge of that kind I should of course be as unable as reluctant to reply. But I certainly was even less prepared to hear the batteries of virtue open fire in another quarter. Sculpture I knew was a dead art; buried centuries deep out of sight, with no angel keeping watch over the sepulchre; its very grave-clothes divided by wrangling and impotent sectaries, and no chance anywhere visible of a resurrection. I knew that belief in the body was the secret of sculpture, and that a past age of ascetics could no more attempt or attain it than the present age of hypocrites; I knew that modern moralities and recent

religions were, if possible, more averse and alien to this purely physical and pagan art than to the others; but how far averse I did not know. There is nothing lovelier, as there is nothing more famous, in later Hellenic art, than the statue of Hermaphroditus. No one would compare it with the greatest works of Greek sculpture. No one would lift Keats on a level with Shakspeare. But the Fates have allowed us to possess at once Othello and Hyperion, Theseus and Hermaphroditus. At Paris, at Florence, at Naples, the delicate divinity of this work has always drawn towards it the eyes of artists and poets.[1] A creature at once foul

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1 Witness Shelley's version:—

"A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
It seemed to have developed no defect
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both;
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked
The bosom lightly swelled with its full youth,
The countenance was such as might select
Some artist, that his skill should never die,
Imaging forth such perfect purity."

Witch of Atlas, st. xxxvi.

But Shelley had not studied purity in the school of reviewers. It is well for us that we have teachers able to enlighten our darkness, or Heaven knows into what

and dull enough to extract from a sight so lovely, from a thing so noble, the faintest, the most fleeting idea of impurity, must be, and must remain, below comprehension and below remark. It is incredible that the meanest of men should derive from it any other than the sense of high and grateful pleasure. Odour and colour and music are not more tender or more pure. How favourite and frequent a vision among the Greeks was this of the union of sexes in one body of perfect beauty, none need be told. In Plato the legend has fallen into a form coarse, hard, and absurd. The theory of God splitting in two the double archetype of man and woman, the original hermaphrodite which had to get itself bisected into female and male, is repulsive and ridiculous enough. But the idea thus incarnate, literal or symbolic, is merely beautiful. I am not the first who has translated into written verse this sculptured poem: another before

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error such as he, or such as I, might not fall. We might even, in time, come to think it possible to enjoy the naked beauty of a statue or a picture without any virtuous vision behind it of a filthy fancy; which would be immoral.

me, as he says, has more than once "caressed it with a sculptor's love." It is, indeed, among statues as a lyric among tragedies; it stands below the Niobe as Simonides below Æschylus, as Correggio beneath Titian. The sad and subtle moral of this myth, which I have desired to indicate in verse, is that perfection once attained on all sides is a thing thenceforward barren of use or fruit; whereas the divided beauty of separate woman and man — a thing inferior and imperfect — can serve all turns of life. Ideal beauty, like ideal genius, dwells apart, as though by compulsion; supremacy is solitude. But leaving this symbolic side of the matter, I cannot see why this statue should not be the text for yet another poem. Treated in the grave and chaste manner as a serious "thing of beauty," to be for ever applauded and enjoyed, it can give no offence but to the purblind and the prurient. For neither of these classes have I ever written or will I ever write. "Loathsome and abominable" and full of "unspeakable foulnesses" must be that man's mind who could here discern evil; unclean and inhuman the animal which could suck from this

mystical rose of ancient loveliness the foul and rancid juices of an obscene fancy. It were a scavenger's office to descend with torch or spade into such depths of mental sewerage, to plunge or peer into subterranean sloughs of mind impossible alike to enlighten or to cleanse.

I have now gone over the poems which, as I hear, have incurred most blame; whether deservedly or not, I have shown. For the terms in which certain critics have clothed their sentiments I bear them no ill-will: they are welcome for me to write unmolested, as long as they keep to simple ribaldry. I hope it gives them amusement; I presume it brings them profit; I know it does not affect me. Absolute falsehood may, if it be worth while, draw down contradiction and disproof; but the mere calling of bad names is a child's trick, for which the small fry of the press should have a child's correction at the hands of able editors; standing as these gentlemen ought to do in a parental or pedagogic relation to their tender charges. They have, by all I see and hear, been sufficiently scurrilous — one or two in particular.

> " However, from one crime they are exempt ;
> They do not strike a brother, striking *me*."

I will only throw them one crumb of advice in return ; I fear the alms will be of no avail, but it shall not be withheld : —

> Why grudge them lotus-leaf and laurel,
> O toothless mouth or swinish maw,
> Who never grudged you bells and coral,
> Who never grudged you troughs and straw?
>
> Lie still in kennel, sleek in stable,
> Good creatures of the stall or sty ;
> Shove snouts for crumbs below the table ;
> Lie still ; and rise not up to lie.

To all this, however, there is a grave side. The question at issue is wider than any between a single writer and his critics, or it might well be allowed to drop. It is this : whether or not the first and last requisite of art is to give no offence ; whether or not all that cannot be lisped in the nursery or fingered in the schoolroom is therefore to be cast out of the library ; whether or not the domestic circle is to be for all men and writers the outer limit and extreme horizon of their world of work. For to this we have come ; and all students of art must face the

matter as it stands. Who has not heard it asked, in a final and triumphant tone, whether this book or that can be read aloud by her mother to a young girl? whether such and such a picture can properly be exposed to the eyes of young persons? If you reply that this is nothing to the point, you fall at once into the ranks of the immoral. Never till now, and nowhere but in England, could so monstrous an absurdity rear for one moment its deformed and eyeless head. In no past century were artists ever bidden to work on these terms; nor are they now, except among us. The disease, of course, afflicts the meanest members of the body with most virulence. Nowhere is cant at once so foul-mouthed and so tight-laced as in the penny, twopenny, threepenny, or sixpenny press. Nothing is so favourable to the undergrowth of real indecency as this overshadowing foliage of fictions, this artificial network of proprieties. *L'Arioste rit au soleil, l'Arétin ricane à l'ombre.* The whiter the sepulchre without, the ranker the rottenness within. Every touch of plaster is a sign of advancing decay. The virtue of our critical journals

is a dowager of somewhat dubious antecedents: every day that thins and shrivels her cheek thickens and hardens the paint on it; she consumes more chalk and ceruse than would serve a whole courtful of crones. "It is to be presumed," certainly, that in her case "all is not sweet, all is not sound." The taint on her fly-blown reputation is hard to overcome by patches and perfumery. Literature, to be worthy of men, must be large, liberal, sincere; and cannot be chaste if it be prudish. Purity and prudery cannot keep house together. Where free speech and fair play are interdicted, foul hints and evil suggestions are hatched into fetid life. And if literature indeed is not to deal with the full life of man and the whole nature of things, let it be cast aside with the rods and rattles of childhood. Whether it affect to teach or to amuse, it is equally trivial and contemptible to us; only less so than the charge of immorality. Against how few really great names has not this small and dirt-encrusted pebble been thrown! A reputation seems imperfect without this tribute also: one jewel is wanting to the crown. It is good to be praised by those whom all

men should praise; it is better to be reviled by those whom all men should scorn.

Various chances and causes must have combined to produce a state of faith or feeling which would turn all art and literature "into the line of children." One among others may be this: where the heaven of invention holds many stars at once, there is no fear that the highest and largest will either efface or draw aside into its orbit all lesser lights. Each of these takes its own way and sheds its proper lustre. But where one alone is dominant in heaven, it is encircled by a pale procession of satellite moons, filled with shallow and stolen radiance. Thus, with English versifiers now, the idyllic form is alone in fashion. The one great and prosperous poet of the time has given out the tune, and the hoarser choir takes it up. His highest lyrical work remains unimitated, being in the main inimitable. But the trick of tone which suits an idyl is easier to assume; and the note has been struck so often that the shrillest songsters can affect to catch it up. We have idyls good and bad, ugly and pretty; idyls of the farm and the mill; idyls of the dining-room and the

deanery; idyls of the gutter and the gibbet. If the Muse of the minute will not feast with "gig-men" and their wives, she must mourn with costermongers and their trulls. I fear the more ancient Muses are guests at neither house of mourning nor house of feasting.

For myself, I begrudge no man his taste or his success; I can enjoy and applaud all good work, and would always, when possible, have the workmen paid in full. There is much excellent and some admirable verse among the poems of the day; to none has it given more pleasure than to me, and from none, had I been a man of letters to whom the ways were open, would it have won heartier applause. I have never been able to see what should attract men to the profession of criticism but the noble pleasure of praising. But I have no right to claim a place in the silver flock of idyllic swans. I have never worked for praise or pay, but simply by impulse, and to please myself; I must therefore, it is to be feared, remain where I am, shut out from the communion of these. At all events, I shall not be hounded into emulation of other men's

work by the baying of unleashed beagles. There are those with whom I do not wish to share the praise of their praisers. I am content to abide a far different judgment:—

> "I write as others wrote
> On Sunium's height."

I need not be over-careful to justify my ways in other men's eyes; it is enough for me that they also work after their kind, and earn the suffrage, as they labour after the law, of their own people. The idyllic form is best for domestic and pastoral poetry. It is naturally on a lower level than that of tragic or lyric verse. Its gentle and maidenly lips are somewhat narrow for the stream and somewhat cold for the fire of song. It is very fit for the sole diet of girls; not very fit for the sole sustenance of men.

When England has again such a school of poetry, so headed and so followed, as she has had at least twice before, or as France has now; when all higher forms of the various art are included within the larger limits of a stronger race; then, if such a day should ever rise or return upon us, it will be once more remembered that the office of

adult art is neither puerile nor feminine, but virile; that its purity is not that of the cloister or the harem; that all things are good in its sight, out of which good work may be produced. Then the press will be as impotent as the pulpit to dictate the laws and remove the landmarks of art; and those will be laughed at who demand from one thing the qualities of another — who seek for sermons in sonnets and morality in music. Then all accepted work will be noble and chaste in the wider masculine sense, not truncated and curtailed, but outspoken and full-grown; art will be pure by instinct and fruitful by nature, no clipped and forced growth of unhealthy heat and unnatural air; all baseness and all triviality will fall of from it, and be forgotten; and no one will then need to assert, in defence of work done for the work's sake, the simple laws of his art which no one will then be permitted to impugn.

The Bibelot

SCARCELY *was the last valediction uttered over his friend and associate, Swinburne, when we were compelled to reiterate over George Meredith the old immortal words of Catullus:* Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale. *If the critical shouting and tumult had but just subsided over the younger and indubitably the greater poet, there was no less an outpouring which to the "right ear that is filled with dust" had been so long delayed and was at last so little heeded.*

Doubtless a few of these leading articles will outlast their "timeliness." Even now volumes dealing with every conceivable phase of Meredith's genius are in the hands of the publishers; but as a very lasting tribute in the shape of a review of Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan's, The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith, (*London, 1906,*) *and considerably revised in his* Modern Studies, (*London, 1907,*) *Prof. Oliver Elton's essay seems to us one of the most sane and sound appreciations extant.*

[*My own feeling toward Meredith is best recalled by the fact that the first book I published* (*in 1891*) *was at the same time*

the earliest reprint of Modern Love *after a waiting period of thirty years. For three decades — such is the astonishing fact — the poem that still remains a* tour de force *of subliminal erotics was practically an unread book: but close upon my adventure his neglected opportunity seized the British publisher and from that time may be dated a rediscovery of the lost poet!*]

To-day the original edition of Modern Love and Poems and Ballads of the English Roadside, (*London, 1862,*) *is still to all intents and purposes out of reach. It is certain, however, that the title-poem must be taken as the pearl of great price in this collection. On the other hand there remains a ballad of which Swinburne in his review of Rossetti's Poems took occasion to remark was "perhaps not very far below" the ballad of* Sister Helen. *He called it "both pathetic and splendid," and Mr. Trevelyan considers it "very successful." It is, at least, difficult of access as outside of the limited* Collected Edition *it has never been reissued. As a fitting supplement to Prof. Elton's essay it may interest the readers of The Bibelot for its "skillful management, variation of the refrain, and for vividness and beauty of phrase."*

GEORGE MEREDITH: AN APPRECIATION
By
OLIVER ELTON.

MARGARET'S BRIDAL EVE
By
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To-day he died: the Master of the Day,
Than whom no man To-day knew more of men:
For us his voice is silent, still his pen.
No need of ours hath power to bid him stay,
Whose hearts he ever held in sovereign sway.
Our life to-day hath nought beyond his ken
Of tears or laughter, nought of strife: and when
He wrote, we read; nor thought to say him nay.

To-day he lives: the Master of all Time.
No less the magic of his matchless skill
In taming stubborn language to his will:
No less the music of his mystic rhyme
To sing the heights of Nature's moods sublime.
The people of his world are with us still.

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON.

May 18, 1909.

G. M.

1828—1909.

FORTY years back, when much had place
That since has perished out of mind,
I heard that voice, and saw that face.

He spoke as one afoot will wind
A morning horn ere men awake;
His note was trenchant, smart, but kind.

He was of those whose words can shake
And riddle to the very core
The falsities that Time will break . . . .

Of late, when we two met once more,
The luminous countenance and rare
Shone just as forty years before.

So that, when now all tongues declare
He is unseen by his green hill,
I scarce believe he sits not there.

No matter. Further and further still
Through the world's vaporous vitiate air
His words wing on — as strong words will.

THOMAS HARDY.

GEORGE MEREDITH: AN APPRECIATION.

I.

"WHO really cares for what I say? The English people know nothing about me. There has always been something antipathetic between them and me. With book after book it was always the same outcry of censure and disapproval. The first time or two I minded it, then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since then I have written only to please myself. But even if you could tell the world all I think, no one would listen."

Mr. Meredith, who is reported thus to have spoken some years ago, has notwithstanding won the only kind of fame for which he can be supposed to care. Not only has he received the Order of Merit, the last official *imprimatur* set by English society upon brains that are pronounced to be eminent and also harmless. He has the honour paid him by all his fellow craftsmen, and by thousands of other persons. In such a case the good of fame is greater to those who proffer it than to the possibly

weary winner of the fame. Mr. Meredith is now a kind of Field-Marshal of English letters. He is the man who has done most, and seen most service. To the general joy he is amongst us and still upon the watch. His first verses were printed in the year (1851) after Wordsworth's *Prelude*. His poetry is still being commented, proclaimed, and defended, it is alive and singing in our ears. *The Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History* were collected in 1898. Last year (1906) saw his jubilee as a novelist; for in 1856 appeared *The Shaving of Shagpat*, which disclosed the costly treasure-house of his fancy and the overrunning springs of his wit. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* came out in 1859, the same year as *Adam Bede* and *The Origin of Species; Lord Ormont and His Aminta*, in 1894. Some thirteen novels, besides short tales, criticisms, and poems, are the fruit of those forty years. Mr. Meredith wrought unwearyably through the later day of Dickens and Thackeray, through the day of George Eliot and the jaunty revulsion against her, and now through the day of Mr. Hardy and Mr. Henry James. He was neglected or

patronized by many of the critics in the sixties and the early seventies, and perhaps the habit of feeling induced by this treatment may linger in the words quoted above. The bigger reading public, the masses of the English community overseas, no doubt are still recalcitrant. Mr. Meredith has never struck home to them, as Dickens struck home with his splendid humanity, his uncertain art and moderate education, and his true wealth of genial and farcical type. Some, too, of those devoted to Thackeray's vast and populous canvas, to his occasional classic sureness and constant elegance of speech (amidst much that is merely journalistic fiction), and to his half-dozen scenes of vehement human drama, may have shivered at the refreshing east wind and shrunk from the mountain sickness that the reader of Mr. Meredith must face. To read him is like climbing, and calls for training and eyesight; but there is always the view at the top, there are the sunrise and the upper air. Nor is such a tax always paid him willingly by the better-trained, serious public of escaped and enlightened puritans, the dwindled public of George Eliot. Nor has

he much in common with the novelists, English and other, of a later day.

For he, like Goethe, "bids you hope," while *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Wings of the Dove* do not. The movement of later fiction is towards pessimism, and its best makers, Guy de Maupassant, Gorky, D'Annunzio, agree in their want of hopefulness if in nothing else. They have been catching up and expressing in fiction ideas that found a nobler expression, philosophical or lyrical, nearly a century ago, in Schopenhauer and Leopardi. The same discouragement lay at the base of Tolstoy's thought, before he found his peculiar salvation, and it still tinges his fiction when he forgets his creed and remembers he is an artist. The history of this pessimistic movement in fiction is still unwritten, and the movement itself is unexhausted.

But the groundwork of Mr. Meredith, with his forward look, his belief in love and courage, is different. It is stoical rather than pessimistic; and in that he resembles Zola, whose method — laborious, serried, humorless — is the opposite of his. Mr. Meredith grew up on the high hopes fed by

the revolutions of the mid-century, and the most heroic figure in his books is Mazzini, the "Chief" in *Vittoria*. He has a moral and spiritual afflatus of the nobler order, peculiarly and traditionally English, in that line of the great English prophets which comes down from Langland and Sir Thomas More to Carlyle. His creed does not depend, visibly, on formal doctrine for its force, but neither does it rest on any pre-occupying enmity towards doctrine. His inspiration plays in various moods — strenuous, ethereal, ironical — rarely serene, over his vision of "certain nobler races, now dimly imagined;" and casts a new interpreting light, above all, on the rarer forms of love and patriotism and friendship. Yet there are none of the airs of the prophet, for the media preferred by Mr. Meredith in his prose are wit and aphorism, situation and portraiture, and to these the lyrical and didactic elements are subordinate.

II.

Mr. Meredith has run a course of his own, and has owed little to any man of his own craft. It may be guessed, indeed, that the author of *Harry Richmond* had

before him in *Copperfield* the example of a new, humorous, natural, and beautiful form of autobiographic fiction. And Thomas Love Peacock, to whom Mr. Meredith's first book was inscribed, may have lent a happy turn to his generous and repeated and witty praise of wine, and have supplied some hint for those country-house gatherings of humorists and fantasts of which a specimen is found so late as 1890 in *One of Our Conquerors*. In such a gathering the inmates and visitors are endowed with a surprising point, wit, and agility of soul in their tongue-combats. But Peacock's humorists all come from London, or from the void, for the week-end, and go back on the Monday. These are minor debts, and Mr. Meredith stands apart from all the recognized groups of schools of English novelists. For his true and chosen background is the real, feudal, Tory, country world of old Victorian England, with its ineradicable shades of caste-feeling, its surface gallantry, its reluctance to think, its vigour of physique, and its excellent manners. It is not likely that such a world, which is still alive, and long will be, should

trouble much about its own countenance as reflected in the "steel glass" of the novelist. His favourite characters are the bravest and fairest that such a society can breed, or at least cannot prevent from being bred, in its midst; and his frequent subject is the struggle of these favourites to rise above the spiritual and mental level of their world. Many of his personages are real gentry, rooted in their estates, persons of the upper untitled or the lower titled classes, or else in some defined social relationship to these — great dames, young soldiers, eldest sons of the land, naval commanders, scholars of the strenuous or the portly type, parsons of good estimation, usually ponderous, and the babbling society mob. In natural connexion with these are the tenants, oaken old yeomen or farmers, Fleming or Blaize, often the fathers of fair daughters, who rise by natural selection, like Lucy Feverel; or gentlemen proved such by trial of circumstance, like Evan Harrington the tailor's son. There are, further, the retainers, butlers, intelligent handmaids, sporting coves, and prize-fighters like that admirable light-weight Skepsey, the servant of Nataly Radnor.

There are the ladies of clouded fame, who serve the unauthorized amusements of gentlemen, and who are somewhat unreal, though tragically-conceived, characters. Mr. Meredith, by choosing within this province an immeasurably higher range of interest and passion than the accurate patient Trollope, has added a new stratum of semi-barbarian territory to English fiction.

It may be called the Empire-making stratum, and the profound feeling for the work and future of our race that throbs through Mr. Meredith's writings provides him with an outlet into a freer air. He is, I have said, a liberal idealist, whose hopes are rooted in the tenacious, the Norman, the constructive aspirations of the Englishman. And his faith is strengthened by his outlook upon the European stir for freedom, which carries him beyond the political creed of the class he portrays. A rare reconciliation of ideals, that may perhaps hereafter be noted as prophetic! In *Vittoria* he finds a subject that is free from any of the limitations imposed by irony. Music and freedom, the freedom of Italy and its signal, the singing of the heroine in La Scala, are

its animating powers. The compass of his gifts, both as an epical narrator and a painter of noble character, are best seen in the pair of stories that take us from the humours of the English lawn to the struggle of Italian liberation. In *Emilia in England*, otherwise *Sandra Belloni*, and in *Emilia in Italy*, otherwise *Vittoria* (all three being names for one woman), he has described, as no English writer ever yet, a true artist-soul, with a patriot soul behind it of equal stature. The companion-book is Mr. Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise*, for the spirit of Mazzini breathes in both. And in other stories Mr. Meredith has found an air freer than that of England. There are bright and keen glimpses of France in *Beauchamp's Career* and in the gracious Renée de Rouaillout. The study of Lassalle and Helène de Racowitza, made from the authorities, in *The Tragic Comedians*, does not fully reach the high-strung purpose of the writer, in spite of the elemental or tidal energy of Alvan-Lassalle. But Alvan is a relief after the manly, self-restrained, pattern Englishmen commonly invented by Mr. Meredith in order to find some one worthy of his heroines.

III.

He seems to have "reversed the order of Paradise," and to have created his women first, and so to have had less clay at disposal for fashioning their mates. Renée, Emilia, Carinthia, Lucy, with their musical names — in their talk, and his talk about them, his style is at its purest and clearest, and the colours of the portraits are unfading. Women are nearer to nature than men, and the power to paint them can only come straight from the breast of nature — from experience lived through and transmuted into artistic form. Indeed, the business of "reading the female heart" has not often been practised in English prose without a dispiriting effect. The tradition of unreality is old and obstinate. It runs far back to the Renaissance romance, like Sidney's *Arcadia* — where, indeed, there is one tragic feminine figure, the queen Gynecia; and to the long-winded books in French and English consumed by our seventeenth-century ancestresses. But those old romances were apt to be made either by courtly, artificial men or by spinsters without any

profitable experience of humanity. One of these spinsters, Samuel Richardson, succeeded once, despite his fussy morals and clammy rhetoric. The laborious knife of George Eliot sometimes bites deep. But a man, if only he is great enough and can rise above the natural barrier ("La haine entre les deux sexes," says Joubert, "ne s'éteint guère") is the best and kindest painter of women and of their ailments of the soul, and the best describer of them. Or so the event seems to have proved. This is not a reflection upon women; for, after all, it is better to belong to the class that is pictured than to the class that paints pictures.

Balzac and Mr. Meredith, diverse in almost all ways, have both left behind them a portrait gallery of actual and living women. Balzac excels with older, harder, and stranger natures. The Englishman, more of a poet at the heart, prefers to celebrate youth and beauty that are victorious after long inward and outward trial. But he has, more than once, his Hermiones as well as his Perditas, figures of the "sanctissima coniux," September faces, thrown into contrast with those fresher ones without

loss of charm. The friendship of Diana of the Crossways and her "Tony" is an instance. *One of Our Conquerors* essays the hardest and nicest problem in Mr. Meredith's later books, as *Rhoda Fleming* does among the earlier. It is a demonstration of the mystery of pain in the hearts of a mother and a daughter. The mother dreads the disclosure, which the daughter has to face, of their socially unauthorized position. The girl is illegitimate, owing to a foolish marriage made by her father long ago. Words are found for her discovery of the circumstance; for this is required the delicacy of the great masters. The mother dies, the girl becomes a magnificent spirit, a sworn defender of the unfortunate among her own sex, and her own happiness is at last assured, a handsome and chivalrous hero being provided for her with some surface failings that make him possible.

But for such work Mr. Meredith has had to invent his own dialect. He sets himself, continually, to realize motives that have their life only in the antechambers of consciousness, and sensations that fade in the effort to give them words. Here he for-

swears whim and witty fancy; in the best passages, all is attention and grave precision. The bending of English prose to this finer purpose is one of Mr. Meredith's substantial glories. Undiscovered forces of vanity, of self-protection that is sure of its danger but not of its reasons, of self-regard and self-distrust, find their calculus. He is taxed with obscurity, but he is as lucid a writer, in this province, as the nature of the subject permits. He moves as safely in the dark as Dostoieffsky, the great specialist; and though, unlike him, he is sometimes hampered by the satiric aim, and is less content to let the nakedness of our nature plead for itself, he is also free from the wildness and mirage and crazy touch that prove refracting elements in *Crime and Punishment* or *The Idiot*. In the scientific dissection of motive, filament by filament, Mr. Henry James ranks beside him, and in the power to realize deeply-plotting, ambiguous natures, may be his superior, just as his hold on beauty of style is more certain and steady. But the characters of Mr. Meredith are fuller than any other novelist's of strong, natural vitality; they fight, and swim, and wander in

scented forests, and wipe the sweat from their brows, and intercept mad dogs, and make love in their youth beneath the wild cherry-blossom, and give their lives to save some "little mudlarking waif," like Beauchamp; and his words accordingly ring and rush as the blood runs faster. Out of this kind of strength comes the power that lies behind the finer, tenderer passages that interpret obscure matters of the heart. The intellect remains the master while threading the mazes of unuttered painful feeling. In the episode already mentioned, Nataly, the nominal wife, who is caught in the birdlime of a false social position, asks a friend for the counsel which yet she fears to receive.

"She bowed to her chastisement. One motive in her consultation with him came of the knowledge of his capacity to inflict it and honesty in the act, and a thirst she had to hear the truth loud-tongued from him: together with a feeling that he was excessive and satiric, not to be read by the letter of his words: and in consequence, she could bear the lash from him, and tell her soul that he overdid it, and have an unjustly-treated self to cherish. But in very truth

she was a woman who loved to hear the truth; *she was formed to love the truth her position reduced her to violate;* she esteemed the hearing of it as medical to her; she selected for counsellor him who would apply it: so far she went on the straight way: and the desire for a sustaining deception from the mouth of a trustworthy man set her hanging on his utterances with an anxious hope of the reverse of what was to come and what she herself apprehended; such as checked her pulses and iced her feet and fingers."

Mr. Meredith's analysis, in serious romance, is nearly always *moral* analysis; it is concerned with complex refinements of the profounder pieties and veracities. He is always testing human nature with his finger, like a glass, to see if it rings clear and right. Or rather, to read him, before the heart is hardened, is like going to the dentist, who does not spare to touch the nerve. This is another reason for his incomplete popularity; but, inasmuch as his science is genuine, it is also a reason for his name enduring. In his dramatic, ironic way, he is one of the masters of the spiritual life: — not the life

of the lonely mystic or thinker (for such persons do not figure in his books as they do in Balzac's) but the life of men and women in contact, snared by instinct or egoism, but capable of emerging with made souls, marked and scarred but ready to begin afresh. Historically, this kind of special power leaves him somewhat solitary amongst English novelists.

IV.

There is, however, no monotony of tragic note. Mr. Meredith's chosen weapon is comedy, and his discourse *On the Idea of Comedy*, given in 1877 at the middle of his career, throws a backward and forward light upon his artistic practice. It is a classic piece of criticism, written by a fellow of Hazlitt, with the advantages that the craftsman, like Dryden in the *Discourse of Satire*, is speaking of his own craft; and that, like Dryden, he has ample reading and scholarship as well as the memory of his own creative processes. As we read, we feel that since Goldsmith the higher comic spirit, as distinct from that of farce or irony, has fled

from the stage to the novel. Mr. Meredith is not popular, because he is full of the comic spirit as he conceives it. It is not the high and bare cynicism of Congreve, the emperor of phrasing. It is distinguished from farcical humour by its different treatment of the victim.

"If you laugh all around him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you and yours to your neighbour, spare him as little as you shun, pity him as much as you expose, it is a spirit of Humour that is moving you."

But even this is not the whole of the comic spirit. Lessing had said that "Comedy is laughter, not derision;" and derision with a moral purpose is still further off from comedy than farce. Even irony is only part of its essence.

"If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod, to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him under a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered doubtful whether indeed anything has hurt him, you are an engine of Irony."

In the view of Mr. Meredith the comic spirit, as distinct from inferior or allied forms of humour, cannot flourish except in a disinfected society where manners are highly trained. Like most honest readers, he finds the Restoration and Revolution comedy, which records quite another society, generally dead and tiresome, presupposing as it does an audience not a little inhuman. The flowering of the comic spirit is bound up, he insists, with the due position and honourable estate of women. Where they are the cheap butts, rather than the arbiters and voices of the comic spirit, there is no hope for it.

"Now, comedy is the fountain of good sense, not the less perfectly sound on account of the sparkle; and comedy lifts women to a station offering them free play for their wit, as they usually show it, when they have it, on the side of good sense. The higher the comedy, the more prominent the part they enjoy in it. . . . Celimène is undisputed mistress of the attribute (of common sense) in the *Misanthrope*, wiser as a woman than Alceste as a man. In Congreve's *Way of the World* Millamant

overshadows Mirabel, the sprightliest male figure of English comedy."

It may be replied that Alceste, with his passion for Celimène conflicting with his passion for sincerity, is the higher of the two; but in respect of pure wit he is doubtless the smaller. It may also be added that Mr. Meredith's women are not often witty, or that when they are their wit is strained. But good sense, barbed with disconcerting smiles, they have in a supreme measure. We can best understand Mr. Meredith's idea of the comic spirit from the malady which it is intended to show up and, if possible, to cure. That is "sentimentalism;" and by the term is understood, not the simple movements of the heart in simple persons, with their untrained expression, but the impulses of vanity or selfish craving, masquerading as those of the heart and uttering phrases too big for the occasion or false to it. Sentimentalism implies the absence both of clear reason, and also of the one other thing, besides religion and country, that the comic spirit respects, simple and healthy passion. *Evan Harrington* and *The Egoist* are built upon this

conception of a vanity which is the target of thoughtful glancing ridicule, and which is at last exposed, if not cured, by the daylight of reason — and banished, if at all, by the warmth of authentic love. *Evan Harrington* is a second *Book of Snobs*, the air being some hundred feet higher of social elevation, and the scene being laid amidst the classes where the sense of rank and caste, at the era depicted in the book, is Chinese in its strictness. It is the lightest and blithest of Mr. Meredith's English tales, and in it his tragic force is sleeping, while his heroic force is at play. *The Egoist*, with its more intricate and mature subject, is now long established in all our affections, and answers best to the author's own "idea" of the comic spirit. Here he writes intoxicated with his own wit, in the way that is so rare in Englishmen. He is like some irresistible executant, unafraid of the most discordant or fantastic witch-dance of words, and yet striking continually into impeccable expression. The same relish is felt in all his later books, but never for so long.

V.

Though no one speaks less from a chair or pulpit, Mr. Meredith stands to be judged as a teacher and prophet. He is not content to be an observer. Comedy and morality are in history old and lawfully wedded lovers. If we cannot have the perfectly free poetical life of Arden, then give us that *L'École des Femmes* or *The Egoist*. In *The Amazing Marriage*, in *One of Our Conquerors*, and everywhere, the pleasure of the educator is apparent. The characters are plunged into trial, they are beaten and tempered and annealed, partly by ridicule, partly by their own passion; and this is done in the name of Nature, to see how they will stand the shock. Mr. Meredith's ethic is best applied in his prose and best expounded in his verse, though his verse comes, far less often than his prose, to rightness of form. He has his own divinity, pagan by name. Where other writers appeal to God or to Humanity, he speaks, somewhat insistently, of the Earth; and the Earth is not the malign stepmother of pessimistic theory, but a stern genial mother, if at times something

of a governess. In Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's clear exposition of *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith*, there is heard a welcome note of caution: —

"Some may think that the value of the lessons he would enforce is not much enhanced by the alleged sanction of Earth. They may think that it is really much the same as the more usual formula of the sanction of Heaven, and that it has equally much or equally little weight."

Earth, however, is less a "sanction" than an emotional symbol of Nature, and its incessant recurrence does more harm to Mr. Meredith's art than to his thinking. Earth lends us our bodies, our fund of power, and our capital of instinct, which may be turned to uses fruitful or sterile. Our life is the adjustment and realization of the forces that Earth has given us. It is love, rightly understood, that tasks and rewards our power of directing those forces. Such love helps us, in its better forms, to the vision of those "nobler races," for out of love they must be begotten. The creed is not unlike Carlyle's in its courage, but it is more possible, less savage, and less solitary. There is

to be no tampering with the intellect by soothing illusions; "we must do," as George Eliot said, "without opium." The volume called *A Reading of Earth*, and the poem therein called *A Faith on Trial*, give us Mr. Meredith's religion. Whatever the power or complexion of the enemy, whether it be ignorance, or languor, or bereavement, or self-deception, he is always in the attitude of the challenger; like Ivanhoe, who rode up the lists, and in token of mortal combat touched the shield with the sharp end of his spear, despite the well-meant hints of "some of the lower classes."

VI.

Soon or late has to be faced the hindrance of Mr. Meredith's verbal strangeness, which is still supposed to warrant or explain his slow acceptance by the public. The robust older critics, who were still flourishing when he began to write fifty years ago, made much, it is said, of this hindrance. But they did not try to understand. Their idea was to decree rewards and punishments to an artist — so many stripes of the cat on the shoulders balanced by so many of good

conduct on the sleeve. The author, if not a criminal who had to come up for punishment, was a kind of ticket-of-leave man who must report himself under suspicion. And if the sentence was capital, the executioner wore a mask of blue or buff, according to the complexion of the journal that sheltered his anonymity. It was the kind of criticism that trained its readers to lose the instinct for literary power, and it is now nearly dead. No doubt there was, at first sight, colourable matter for reproach. In every book by Mr. Meredith, from *The Shaving of Shagpat* to *The Amazing Marriage*, the outline of the figures and even of the events is more or less veiled under a sparkling mist or spray of commentary, an emanation of bewildering light. Self-suppression does not enter into such a method, as it does into that of Flaubert, and there is as much choric interlude as drama. There is a heady, subtle element, which beguiles and dislodges the reader, and dazes him with myriads of epigrams. The epigrams of Mr. Meredith might be fairly divided into those which leave a headache behind them and those that do not. So great a rapidity of com-

ment does not make for proportion and composition. But take the story, and strip it, at whatever momentary sacrifice, of all but the actual narrative and dialogue, keeping also the passages that expressly describe motive and sensation, but leaving out the chorus of aphorisms, and the test will be nobly met. We can then go back again and put in as much of the rainbow as we will. The difficulty of style is felt most keenly in Mr. Meredith's poetry. There, in its most restless form, is the swift intellect, working for the writer's cherished ethical or spiritual ideas, and working through a torrent of images, sometimes turbid and sometimes abstrusely delicate, but huddling on one another as fast as in the dying speech of Romeo. As Lamb said of Shakespeare, "before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure." But the poetry also often suffers (the prose less, because prose will bear more of such vagrancy than poetry, and yet remain true to the law of its art) because the intellect, so far from being content to let the sensuous matter clear itself and rely on itself, as Keats in his finest passages is content to do, is

always interposing and enlisting that material in the service of the "criticism of life." Many are the verses where the issue is doubtful, or rather not doubtful; where the night-long wrestle with words is continued from sheer courage rather than in the hope or possibility of victory. Many, again, for instance in *Modern Love*, are those where the result is impeccable and the sense of strain is lost. More seldom are the imagery and the music all-sufficient to one another, in a kind of Goethe-like repose, as here:—

> The pine-tree drops its dead;
> They are quiet, as under the sea.
> Overhead, overhead,
> Rushes life in a race,
> As the clouds the clouds trace chase:
> And we go,
> And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
> Even we,
> Even so.

But commonly, in Mr. Meredith's verses, imagination is at war with and outraces its own power of expression, and thus is too frequently defeated, though its triumphs are not rare, and would, if selected and arrayed together, form a "golden treasury" large

enough. But, as with some older poets like George Chapman, words, lines, and passages, which are informed with lofty and gracious ideas, are so variably cast that the innermost soul of poetry must alternately repudiate and welcome them. In the novels the proportion is different; the pages that go quite amiss and do violence to the writer's own ideals of form are relatively fewer. The diction of Mr. Meredith in his prose is, for long spaces, pure, chosen, and simple. The oddness is produced by slight dislocations of historic English, an unusual order of words, a curious disposal of particles and abstract nouns, which in cumulation give a superficial effect of freakishness. As so often with Latin or Italian, the decipherer finds himself gazing at a sentence made up of common words without getting to their sense. The subject may be commended to some young Germanized American for a golden or leaden dissertation. There is, indeed, no reason why a classic author should not be treated by the usual methods of scholarship, if they are applied with tact, as Mr. Trevelyan applies them. This is only a sign of respect, which we offer to

Chapman or to Donne. But it may be well to have the transpicuous page of Fielding open before us, that we may keep our heads while we study the heir of his noble art.

MARGARET'S BRIDAL-EVE.

I.

THE old grey mother she thrumm'd on her knee:
There is a rose that 's ready;
And which of the handsome young men shall it be?
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

My daughter, come hither, come hither to me:
There is a rose that 's ready;
Come, point me your finger on him that you see:
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O mother, my mother, it never can be:
There is a rose that 's ready;
For I shall bring shame on the man marries me:
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

Now let your tongue be deep as the sea;
There is a rose that 's ready;
And the man'll jump for you, right briskly will he:
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

Tall Margaret wept bitterly;
There is a rose that 's ready;
And as her parent bade did she;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O the handsome young man dropp'd down on his knee;
There is a rose that 's ready;
Pale Margaret gave him her hand, woe 's me!
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

II.

O MOTHER, my mother, this thing I must say,
There is a rose in the garden;
Ere he lies on the breast where that other lay:
And the bird sings over the roses.

Now, folly, my daughter, for men are men:
There is a rose in the garden;
You marry them blindfold, I tell you again:
And the bird sings over the roses.

O mother, but when he kisses me!
There is a rose in the garden;
My child, 'tis which shall sweetest be!
And the bird sings over the roses.

O mother, but when I awake in the morn!
There is a rose in the garden;
My child, you are his, and the ring is worn;
And the bird sings over the roses.

Tall Margaret sigh'd and loosen'd a tress;
There is a rose in the garden;

Poor comfort she had of her comeliness;
And the bird sings over the roses.

My mother will sink if this thing be said:
There is a rose in the garden;
That my first betrothed came thrice to my bed;
And the bird sings over the roses.

He died on my shoulder the third cold night;
There is a rose in the garden;
I dragg'd his body all through the moonlight;
And the bird sings over the roses.

But when I came by my father's door;
There is a rose in the garden;
I fell in a lump on the stiff dead floor;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O neither to heaven, nor yet to hell;
There is a rose in the garden;
Could I follow the lover I loved so well!
And the bird sings over the roses.

III.

THE bridesmaids slept in their chambers apart;
There is a rose that 's ready;
Tall Margaret walk'd with her thumping heart;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

The frill of her nightgown below the left breast,
There is a rose that 's ready ;
Had fall'n like a cloud of the moonlighted west ;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

But where the west-cloud breaks to a star ;
There is a rose that 's ready ;
Pale Margaret's breast show'd a winding scar ;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O few are the brides with such a sign !
There is a rose that 's ready ;
Tho' I went mad the fault was mine ;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

I must speak to him under this roof to-night ;
There is a rose that 's ready ;
I shall burn to death if I speak in the light ;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O my breast ! I must strike you a bloodier wound ;
There is a rose that 's ready ;
Than when I scored you red and swoon'd,
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

I will stab my honour under his eye ;
There is a rose that 's ready ;
Tho' I bleed to the death, I shall let out the lie ;
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O happy my bridesmaids! white sleep is with you!
There is a rose that 's ready;
Had he chosen among you he might sleep too!
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

O happy my bridesmaids! your breasts are clean;
There is a rose that 's ready;
You carry no mark of what has been!
There 's a rose that 's ready for clipping.

IV.

An hour before the chilly beam,
Red rose and white in the garden;
The bridegroom started out of a dream,
And the bird sings over the roses.

He went to the door, and there espied
Red rose and white in the garden;
The figure of his silent bride,
And the bird sings over the roses.

He went to the door, and let her in;
Red rose and white in the garden;
Whiter look'd she than a child of sin;
And the bird sings over the roses.

She look'd so white, she look'd so sweet;
Red rose and white in the garden;

She look'd so pure he fell at her feet;
And the bird sings over the roses.

He fell at her feet with love and awe;
Red rose and white in the garden;
A stainless body of light he saw;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O Margaret, say you are not of the dead!
Red rose and white in the garden;
My bride! by the angels at night are you led?
And the bird sings over the roses.

I am not led by the angels about;
Red rose and white in the garden;
But I have a devil within to let out;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O Margaret! my bride and saint!
Red rose and white in the garden;
There is on you no earthly taint:
And the bird sings over the roses.

I am no saint, and no bride can I be,
Red rose and white in the garden;
Until I have open'd my bosom to thee;
And the bird sings over the roses.

To catch at her heart she laid one hand;
Red rose and white in the garden;
She told the tale where she did stand;
And the bird sings over the roses.

She stood before him pale and tall;
Red rose and white in the garden;
Her eyes between his, she told him all;
And the bird sings over the roses.

She saw how her body grew freckled and foul;
Red rose and white in the garden;
She heard from the woods the hooting owl;
And the bird sings over the roses.

With never a quiver her mouth did speak;
Red rose and white in the garden;
O when she had done she stood so meek!
And the bird sings over the roses.

The bridegroom stamp'd and call'd her vile;
Red rose and white in the garden;
He did but waken a little smile;
And the bird sings over the roses.

The bridegroom raged and call'd her foul;
Red rose and white in the garden;
She heard from the woods the hooting owl;
And the bird sings over the roses.

He mutter'd a name full bitter and sore:
Red rose and white in the garden;
She fell in a lump on the stiff dead floor;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O great was the wonder, and loud was the wail,
Red rose and white in the garden;
When through the household flew the tale;
And the bird sings over the roses.

The old grey mother she dress'd the bier;
Red rose and white in the garden;
With a shivering chin and never a tear;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O had you but done as I bade you, my child!
Red rose and white in the garden;
You would not have died and been reviled;
And the bird sings over the roses.

The bridegroom he hung at midnight by the bier;
Red rose and white in the garden;
He eyed the white girl thro' a dazzling tear;
And the bird sings over the roses.

O had you been false as the women who stray;
Red rose and white in the garden;
You would not be now with the Angels of Day!
And the bird sings over the roses.

The Bibelot

THE *name of Mr. Gordon Bottomley, one could almost hazard the opinion, is very little known in England and, in America not known at all. Nevertheless, he has produced several volumes of which our reprint of his earliest play is well worth while. Perhaps no better method of riveting the reader's attention could be found than by citing what the* Academy *reviewer said of* The Crier by Night *at the time of its publication:*

"*It is in many ways a singular poem. Though the stage-directions seem to imply it is designed for the stage, we cannot conceive its being effective as a play. In its whole style and conception it is a direct imitation of Mr. W. B. Yeats. One can even name the play of Mr. Yeats's that has suggested it* — The Land of Heart's Desire. *And yet, despite all this, there is in it a strong originality — originality in expression, originality even in conception — though that may seem a contradiction. It is very simple; an Irish thrall in the hands of a Northern couple, of whom the wife is a fiendish tyrant, while with the husband, who*

befriends her, the girl-serf is in love. A demoniacal visitant (the "Crier by Night" of the title) approaches the hut at midnight, and the thrall sells her soul to him in return for the death of the man; that she may have vengeance on the wife, and secure the husband to herself in the other world. The originality lies in the details and working-out of the conception. There is not a human character in the poem: the wife is a mere she-devil, the man a lay-figure, the girl half of the other world. Yet it is strangely impressive: one feels the sorcery. The poetry is sombrely strong, and has caught the spirit of Celtic legend with fidelity:—

We are the tears that God wipes from His eyes.

I must follow him
Past where the imaged moon shakes like a soul
Pausing in death between two unknown worlds.

Under each dark grey lash a long tear slid
Like rain in a wild rose's shadowy curve
Bowed in the wind about the morning twilight.

Such are a few of the detachable lines in it. But no quotation will convey the power of the poem.

"Though its style follows Mr. Yeats so closely, and catches something of his poetic quality, its essential quality is darker, sterner, more grimly suggestive than his.

A wild and morbid preternaturalism informs the brief drama, which certainly gives promise that Mr. Bottomley has it in him to work out a distinctive vein of his own. At present he has too much of Mr. Yeats's manner to get full credit for that in him which is himself."

A list of Mr. Bottomley's works is at best tentative:

1. *Poems at White-Nights* ( ).
2. *The Crier by Night: A Play in One Act* (1902).
3. *The Gate of Smaragdus* (1904).
4. *Midsummer Eve: A Dramatic Pastoral Poem* ( ).
5. *The Riding to Lithend: A Play in One Act* (1909).

All of these books were issued in very limited editions and, with the exception of the last named, are practically unobtainable. From an artistic as well as poetic standpoint The Gate of Smaragdus *is a most extraordinary production, and at some future time, if what we now reprint is of sufficient interest, may demand our attention.*

FOR OCTOBER:

THE LITTLE CROW OF PARADISE
AND OTHER FANTASIES
BY J. H. PEARCE.

THE CRIER BY NIGHT:
A PLAY IN ONE ACT
By
GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY:

HIALTI, a Northman
THORGERD, his Wife
BLANID, an Irish Bondmaid
AN OLD STRANGE MAN

THE CRIER BY NIGHT.

It happens on a wild night of late Autumn in a cottage near a misty mere and among unseen mountains. In the back wall are a door to the right and a long low window in the middle; the latter is shuttered on the outside, and on door and window the wind-driven rain rattles. In the middle of the right-hand wall a door leads into an out-house; near it is a loom: toward the front of the left-hand wall another door leads to a sleeping-chamber; a settle extends along this wall and in front of it a long table is set. Two rush-lights burn on the table. The round hearth is in the middle of the house, and its smoke rises into a luffer which hangs from the thatched roof between two beams. The floor is thickly strewn with rushes. There are several wooden stools about the hearth, on one of which HIALTI *is sitting mending harness.* THORGERD *is standing near the loom, spinning with a distaff.*

HIALTI.

THE lass is late about; where is she now?

THORGERD.

Let the lass be. What is the lass to you?
She is my lass to handle as I will —
My father gave her to me for my own,
And so I use her as I use my gear . . .

"She will not last" say you? Well, what of that?
I know gear must wear out being well-used;
Shoes must be trodden under-foot all day,
Though in the mire they go and to the mire;
The hearth-fire wastes the irons used to tend it:
I am the huswife — leave the house to me
And buy me new gear when the old is rotten.

HIALTI.

You drive her over hard. In the cold dark,
Hours ere the thin late dawn, she was afoot,
And she has been afoot each moment since:
The butter will not come now without fire,
But I was wakened in the frosty night
By the slow moaning of her weary churn,
And when I rose she stood here without shoes —
She said you took them from her — well, I sought,
And gave her them again, and lit the fire.
She dare not sleep with half your tasks undone,
But you slept and your sleep was all her rest;
Yet in her land 'tis you would be the thrall.
You shut the hens in from the storm all day,
But she must trudge with peat-mull in a swill
Up from the water-side and down all day . . .

THORGERD.

Spare her and have my firing spoilt? Not I . . .
Had it been sodden, how could you light her fires?

HIALTI.

You drive her over hard.

THORGERD.

What is it to you?
Fodder and yoke your neats, see to your swine,
Put them to breed, and leave my stock to me.
If this is over hard, what will it be —
Last week she still could smile sometimes, so yet
She smiles too often for my happiness . . .
What money did the calves fetch at the fair?

HIALTI.

Where is she now?

THORGERD.

What money did the calves
Fetch at the fair last week?

HIALTI.

Where is she now?

THORGERD.

I spilt the water; she must needs draw more.

HIALTI.

The roof-drip at the door would fill her pails.

THORGERD.

What money did the calves fetch at the fair?

HIALTI.

You need not ask; you had it all to hoard.

THORGERD.

You kept some back; who bought them?

HIALTI.

He who paid . . .

The door opens and, as the rain drives in, BLANID *enters carrying two pails of water by a yoke. Her short-sleeved frayed hempen smock is dripping wet; an old cart-strap is buckled about her middle; her ankles are bare, but her feet are covered by shapeless brogues; her matted hair is cut short, and she has an iron collar about her neck. She sets down her pails, and with difficulty shuts and bolts the door against the wind. Then she carries her pails into the outhouse; as she moves about she is heard to sing to a tired monotonous tune —*

The bird in my heart 's a-calling through a far-fled tear-grey sea
To the soft slow hills that cherish dim waters weary for me
Where the folk of rath and dun trail homeward silently
In the mist of the early night-fall that drips from their hair like rain.

The bird in my heart 's a-flutter, for the bitter wind of
the sea
Shivers with thyme and woodbine, as my body with
memory;
I hear their perfumes ooze in my ears like melody —
The scent of the mead at the harping I shall not
hear again.

The bird in my heart 's a-sinking to a hushed vale hid
in the sea
Where the moonlit dew o'er dead fighters is stirred by
the feet of the Shee
Who are lovely and old as the earth, but younger than
I can be
Having known the forgetting of dying to a life one
lonely pain . . .

THORGERD (*as* BLANID *comes from the outhouse*).

Come here; give me your shoes; quickly, I say.
Why must you go shod softly? Give me your shoes.

She takes them and puts them on the fire.

Is there some joy so deep within you still
That I have missed it though 'tis bright for singing?
It shall not be so long; sing while you can.

BLANID.

No joy ever sank deep enough for singing;
Trouble and all the sorrowful ways of men

Must stir the sad unrest that ends in song;
Joy seeks but peace and silence and still thought,
But those who cannot weep must sing for ease
And in the sound forget the thought that smote it.

THORGERD.

I am made glad, hearing your misery,
Yet all the shapeless creeping shivering sounds
You wail about the house will make me share it;
Your songs of faëry and nameless kings
And things that never happened long ago
And an unknown impossible shadowy land
Are useless as the starlight after moonset
That will not light men homeward from the fair —
Nay, useless as its melting down thin water —
If you must sing, sing truth to gut-strong tunes —
Of Gunnar or of Freya or Andvari,
Vineland the Good and the old Western sea.

BLANID.

Things need not happen that they may be true;
Although impossible they may be true —
The things that matter happen in the heart.
All earthly truth is true but for a time,
Whilst ages may be altered by one dream —
The things that matter happen in the heart . . .

THORGERD.

Useless as starlight or the aimless wind . . .

BLANID.

The wind is all the souls of those sad dead
Who will not enter Heaven for love of earth,
And hither and thither surge to find the gate
They see and know not on its new strange side;
For they have learned too much to be let back —
Ah, some have learned too much before they die.

As she crosses the house at the back HIALTI *turns and, catching her hands in his, draws her toward him.*

HIALTI.

Is it too hard, the thought of that lost vale?

BLANID.

It is too hard, because I must so love it
That were I free I should go there no more,
Lest I should hate it; I must always suffer,
I only suffer this way rather than that —
'Tis the eternal suffering of love
Must search me somehow with love's pitilessness
To make me know all souls; what matter how?
O, I am but a troubled dream of God's,
And even His will can alter not His dreams;
Yea, He is dreaming me a little while —
I must be dreamed out to the hardest end,
Returning then to be unknown in Him —
I shall be Him again when He awakes.
Ah, God, awake, and so forget me soon.

THORGERD (*swinging her aside by the collar on her neck*).

Set on the water for the porridge; go.

BLANID *goes into the outhouse;* THORGERD *continues to* HIALTI:

Why must you hold her hands and hold her eyes?

HIALTI.

Under each dark grey lash a long tear slid
Like rain in a wild rose's shadowy curve
Bowed in the wind about the morning twilight.

THORGERD.

Have done; I know; you left the fair at noon
To reach the copse just at the young moon's setting—
I could not find her till i' the night-hid copse
A woman's voice sobbed "If he would but come . . ."

HIALTI.

It is not true; you know it is not true.
Let her alone; you know that I must love you,
And if she loves me she will know it too
And hurt herself far more than you can hurt her.

THORGERD.

I hear you say it . . . and afterward? . . . Perhaps
My little shears are sharp as any knife . . .

HIALTI.

You would not kill her?

THORGERD.

When have I grown kind-hearted?

She lays her hand on his shoulder and leaning her mouth to his ear says in a low, distinct voice:

Slit nose and lip and where's her beauty then?

He starts from his stool.

Nay, are my kinsfolk as far off as hers?

He turns away as BLANID *enters with an iron pot which she hangs from a hook over the fire, and a pitcher of milk which she sets on the table.*

THORGERD *takes the pot from the fire.*

Here's too much water; it will never boil,
And if it did the mess would be too thin.

She pours water from the pot upon the floor, then hangs the pot over the fire again.

Set out the bowls, and finger not their lips.

BLANID *goes again to the outhouse, and, returning, sets three bowls with spoons on the table, and a jar of meal by the hearth.*

Though porridge needs meal you shall not think for me;
Do nought until I bid you — once. The grain.

BLANID *goes yet again to the outhouse and returns with a bag of grain.*

You know what grain is for; why do you stand?
Your feet are mine . . . Down to the quern . . . Get down

BLANID.

There 's meal in plenty for to-morrow.

THORGERD (*laying down her distaff to make the porridge*).

Ay,
But is there meal in plenty for next month?
You may be dead then; therefore you must toil
That I may need to do no aching tasks
Until my man can buy another drudge
From the next herd; for so we shall forget you.

BLANID (*kneeling by the quern between the window and the door, and commencing to grind grain*).

You hate me far too subtly to forget me;
There is not enough kindness in your heart
To let you thus forego your joy of hate.
Then, too, despite the accident of death,
I cannot go from here against my will.

THORGERD.

You shall not die ere I have done with you,
And death shall only come by suffering
Until you are too feeble even to suffer.

BLANID.

The sound of death is ever in mine ears
Monotonous as the night's infinity
Wherein I was once born, where salt winds sweep
The wailing of the waters of the West.
I die, but you can ne'er have done with me.

THORGERD (*the porridge being made*).

Come, drudge, lift off the pot and fill the bowls.

BLANID (*having filled two bowls*).

The pot is empty.

THORGERD.

But the bowls are full.

HIALTI.

Now, give the lass some supper; fill her bowl.

THORGERD (*pouring milk over the porridge*).

There 's but enough for two; I 'll make no more.
Here, take the pot and scrape it at the quern.

HIALTI *and* THORGERD *draw stools to the table;* BLANID *carries the pot to the outhouse and returns to the quern; supper proceeds in silence for a few moments, then* HIALTI *rises and offers his bowl to* BLANID.

HIALTI.

Share with me, lass; I need no more to-night.

Before BLANID *can taste the porridge* THORGERD *strikes the bowl from her hand.*

HIALTI (*indignantly, as he reaches to* THORGERD'S *bowl*).

She shall have yours; go you and make us more . . .

He is interrupted by a distant wailing which is heard through the storm.

THE VOICE.

Ohey! Ohey! Ohohey!

BLANID.

Master, I hear one calling in the night.

HIALTI (*in a subdued voice*).

It is the wind across the chimney-slates.

THE VOICE.

Ohey! Ohohey!

BLANID.

Master, a man is calling in the night.

HIALTI.

An owl storm-beaten drowns down the long mere.

THE VOICE (*sounding nearer on a gust of wind*).

Ohohey! Ohohey!

BLANID.

Master, one lost is helpless in the night.

THORGERD (*gently and with an eager smile*).

Ay, lass, good lass; go, lass, and seek for him —
Maybe he sinks amid the marshy reeds —
Bring him to warmth and supper and a bed.
I'll shut the door; the light will only daze you.

HIALTI (*leaping to the door before* BLANID, *and setting his back to it*).

No, no; back, girl, get back. (*To* THORGERD.) You murderess,
You know it is the Crier of the Ford
Who wakens when the clashing waters rise
In unseen foam a man's height o'er the ford
And the choked night is black with level rain.
Then his slow crying creeps about the storm,
As though an unborn child groped for the day,
And snares the spent wayfarer to the ford
Or draws some pitiful helper to the ford
To drown them where the unknown water swirls
And strangle them with long brown water-weed,
Gathering their souls for his old soul to feed on
Because it has no body to nourish it.

THORGERD (*hastily yet sullenly*).

How should I know?

She grips BLANID'S *shoulder, and hurries her to the outhouse.*

Get in with you to your straw.

She thrusts her into the outhouse and shuts the door upon her; then she turns to HIALTI.

Fool, now I know you love her behind your heart.

HIALTI.

I have no mind to waste a half-spent thrall
To prove I love you; and to buy another
Would need more money than eight red-polled stirks.

THORGERD.

Choose between her and me; if you take her,
I take the land.

HIALTI.

I love you overmuch
To set you equally against a thrall.

THORGERD.

What, do I touch you when I touch your fields?

HIALTI.

To-morrow I must drive the sold ewes home
And lead more bedding from the bracken-fell
If the storm clears — it is well stacked and dry;
So we must be a-stirring by lantern-light
Since now you will not have the lass go with me
To milk, but go yourself although three cows
Will not let down their milk to you at all,
You drag their teats so: waking-time comes soon —
Best get to bed.

THORGERD.

And leave you to go to your straw's wench?

HIALTI (*taking a rush-light in his hand*).

Here are enough of your unfaithful words;
I'll alter this to-morrow.

THORGERD.

Ay, to-morrow.

HIALTI *enters the sleeping-chamber; after watching the door close upon him,* THORGERD, *her hands clenched and her arms rigid, swiftly steps half way toward the outhouse; then, suddenly, relaxing into a pause and smiling with tight lips as she shakes her head slightly and sharply, she turns to the table again, doffs her coif and draws her hair down, blows out the remaining rush-light, and follows* HIALTI *into the sleeping-chamber.*

Henceforth the cottage is only lit by the ever-dying fire; a long empty silence ensues, broken only by the tumult of the storm and the tinkle of the sinking embers.

At last the outhouse door opens slowly and from it BLANID *steps listeningly across the house, in front of the hearth, to the door of the sleeping-chamber, remaining there for a little time with her ear against the door-boards; then she returns noiselessly across the house, behind the hearth, pausing near the house door.*

BLANID (*in a hushed voice*).

If day were only darkness melting down
From darkness into darkness like this rain,
Lost ere 'tis known, then I might always sleep
And sleep and dream I was a queen once more —
She does not know I was a jewelled queen,
For so I spoil her of new heights of joy
In which she might for haughtiness fondle me —
O, I would sleep in that old Crier's arms,
Enduring silence harder than all else,
A mote shut into one cold, kneaded eyelid
Of the dead mere, and dream into the wind,
And cling to stars lest I should slip through space,
And dream I was the body of him I love
Who yields me only kindness, never love —
O me, that misery of hopeless kindness;
But I 'll not die and leave him to her lips;
Though I can never have him she shall not,

For I can use this body worn to a soul
To barter with that Crier of hidden things
That if he tangles him in his chill hair
Then I will follow and follow and follow and follow
Past where the imaged stars ebb past their light
And turn to water under the dark world.

She goes out into the night of storm, leaving the door open behind her. Presently she is heard singing to a chant-like ever-falling melody.

I stand in the sick night, whose hid shape is my own shape,
As dazed life in the flickering hearts of old men;
I think like a lean heron with bald head and frayed nape
Motionlessly moulting in a flat pool of a grey fen,
Whose sleep-blinked horny eyes know it can ne'er moult again.

My age-long cry droops in the hoar unseen stars that shake
Until their discordant rays make darkness inside the sky;
My bare cry shivers along the slimy rushes of the drowned lake —
Weariful waters, do you hear a soul's hair tingling your veiled feet nigh?
I stand outside my keen body, yearning into you as I cry.

HIALTI (*within*).

Is that the lass sobbing a song in sleep?

THORGERD (*within*).

The wind, the wind, and so as much as she.

BLANID (*still out of doors, singing*).

Old father of many waters, can you feel my soul touching
yours?
I know that to greet your calling leaves me no more any
yea or nay;
Yet I too am of kin with lost woods and sedgy shores,
So come secret as your black wind and take the dark
core of my heart away
Ere you beget me on death to be still-born to an unlit day.

Ohey! Ohey! Ohohey!

THE VOICE.

Ohohey! Ohey!

HIALTI (*within*).

Is there a woman's voice inside the wind?

THORGERD (*within*).

. . . the unclean Crier croaking . . . cover your ears . . .

BLANID *re-enters the house hurriedly; she shuts and bolts the door, hardly knowing what she does; she falls on her knees with her back to the door, breathing quickly*

and hard and swaying backward and forward, her face hid in her hands.

Again and again a terrible blast of wind strains at the unyielding door.

THE VOICE (*close at hand*).

Open, open; I cannot open; open.
I cannot come to you unless you open.

BLANID (*muttering behind her hands*).

I will not go . . . I can do nothing else . . .
It shall not enter . . . O, it is in my heart . . .

She totters fearsomely to the door, after many hesitant backward glances, and opens it slowly and as if she had never known how to open it. She reels against the wall and stands there motionlessly, clutching it with flat hands and outspread arms, as a stooping figure swathed in a rain-coloured, rain-soaked cloak and deep hood enters. Wisps of white hair flutter in the mouth of the hood, and one flicker of the fire-light shows in its depths a soft shrunken beardless face with an almost lipless sunken mouth.

THIS OLD STRANGE MAN (*speaking always in a low even mournful voice*).

A spirit calling in an old old tongue
Forgotten in lost graves in lonesome places;

A spirit huddled in an old old heart
Like a blind crone crouched o'er a long-dead fire;
A spirit shrinking in the old old hills,
Dreading to step down water or hollow night —
Some seek me dreaming one last hope of joy,
Some have been made too wise by too much joy
And seek me longing for deeper misery,
Knowing that joy is weary in unending,
Changeless and one and easy in low perfection,
While misery has as many shapes as evil
That all must learn, and is made new for ever
By fear of pain desired for love of passion;
But feel, O you who call me through the night,
I bring you neither joy nor misery
But only rest so slow and sad and sodden
You will not know of it — you shall only rest
And lose your soul in my soul evermore.

Sounds of heavy breathing are heard from the sleeping-chamber during his speaking. Continually he is reaching to BLANID *with his muffled unseen hands, but she holds them from her as continually.*

BLANID (*always in an eager suppressed voice*).

I have known joy — I know not what it was,
Mead-fumes that filled me cooling to one drop —
I have known misery — a self-numbed sting
That showed me but another joy to lose —

These were too small, I will have only rest
And lose my soul in your soul evermore.
But if I die into your drooping limbs
I must be mingled there with him I love —
You may not reach him by your hoary crying,
But raise some human wail for help and light
And he will come and I must follow him
Past where the imaged moon shakes like a soul
Pausing in death between two unknown worlds.

THE OLD MAN.

A sign, a plighting, and I do your will.

BLANID (*winding her arms about his arms from one side, so that he cannot touch her, and burying her face in his hood*).

Kisses. 'Hast drained my soul's blood in each kiss.

THE OLD MAN.

I go, I go; make me not come again,
For I am in you, you must melt to me
Past where the imaged dark shuts bending lovers'
Close unseen-imaged faces within life . . .

Keeping his face turned toward BLANID, *he fades to the door, where he ceases to be seen in the wind that scurries past.*

THE VOICE (*immediately and far away*).

Help, help, the marsh-lights 'wilder us! A light!

BLANID *shuts the door. The fire has now sunk so low that as she crosses the house she is only visible in the half-dark as a dim shape. She pauses by the hearth.*

BLANID.

Nay, but I touch toward my joy at last,
And Christ and all His Saints go out like candles
When mass is said and the priest's cup is wiped . . .

THE VOICE.

The water laps our waists! Help, help! A light!

BLANID (*running to the sleeping-chamber door*).

Master, I hear a calling . . .

After an interval she smites the door, crying loudly:

Master! Master!

HIALTI (*within*).

Has the flood washed into the shippon?

BLANID.

Nay;
There is a pitiful shrieking in the dark.

HIALTI (*within*).

It is the Crier; break sleep no more for that.

THORGERD (*within*).

The ox-goad shall reward you when dawn comes . . .
Wake us once more and you shall waken often,
Ay, very often, until you dread to sleep . . .

BLANID.

I heard that trailing cry like maddened fir-boughs,
Now I hear words — is there a woman's wail?

THORGERD (*within*).

A woman? Let her drown.

HIALTI (*within*).

I come. I come.
Reach down the lantern and light it, light it, light it.

Standing on a stool, BLANID *lifts a lantern from a nail in one of the beams and, carrying it to the hearth, kneels there and seeks to light it with an ember.*

THORGERD (*within*).

You shall not go; it is a lie of hers;
You shall not go . . .

A brief struggle is heard.

HIALTI (*within*).

So; stand you from the door;
Get donned; make up the fire; have water boiling,
And send the wench to lie in your warm form
Ready to cherish what stiffening thing I bring.

BLANID (*to herself, lighting the lantern and smiling mischievously*).

Yea, I shall cherish a stiffening thing for her.
Lantern, you are as dim as a little soul,
Yet the least soul can light a man to Heaven,
And you might lead him home — but I am like God,
Who makes souls from His aches — I will not ache,
You shall not have a soul — I suck it back.

She extinguishes the light.

HIALTI (*hurrying into the house half dressed*).

Canst find a rope?

BLANID (*pointing*).

Behind the settle there.

To herself:

'Tis a good rope and has two rotten strands;
'Twas meant to make good tinder on the morrow.

THE VOICE.

Help, help! A light! Come for the woman's sake!

HIALTI (*holding out his hand for the lantern*).

Hearken and haste; give me the lantern — now!

BLANID.

Master, it will not light . . .

HIALTI.

Will the storm pause?

THE VOICE.

Ohohey! Ohohey!

HIALTI.

Will that dark Crier linger? I must go.

She catches his outstretched hand and kisses it ere, snatching it away, he flings the house door wide open and dashes outside. Soon the sound of his footsteps is lost in the storm.

BLANID (*relighting the lantern and starting up*).

Master, Master, the light!

Pausing and sending the lantern crashing on the hearth with both hands.

He shall not have it!

She stands with her hands gripping her breasts, leaning forward toward the open door; her breathlessness is all that is heard; she stretches her arms to the night.

BLANID.

I feel as if my long long hands could reach
Down to the water's heart to pluck him from it . . .

THE VOICE.

Will no one ever come?

HIALTI (*out of doors*).

I come; I am nigh.

BLANID.

Ay, he is nigh, but soon he will be far . . .
I dare not thus fall through the world for him . . .
O, I shall hear him . . . do not let me hear him . . .

She throws herself on her face on the floor and, covering her head with the strewn rushes and clasping her hands over them, lies there moaning.

HIALTI (*afar off, shouting ever more madly*).

Thorgerd, Thorgerd . . . your hands . . . the world
slips past me . . .
Save . . . under . . . under . . . under . . . Aa—h . . .

The shouting ceases suddenly at its height.

BLANID (*muffled and choking*).

Her name . . . her name . . . why did he not think
my name? . . .
But she has lost him and I kissed his hand . . .

THORGERD (*rushing from the sleeping-chamber in her night-gear*).

Where is the wench . . . Make haste — another light . . .
I heard him dying. O, this prater's breath
Will blow his life out . . . Kindle a light and come . . .

THE VOICE.

Ohey! Ohohey! Ohey!

BLANID.

Nay! Nay! Nay! I dare not, I dare not . . .
That Crier will drown me too . . .

THORGERD.

That is nought to me;
Get to your feet . . . What, shall I seek a way
To supple you?

BLANID.

O, do not hurt me again . . .
He dies . . . it is my deed . . . I dare not come . . .

THORGERD.

You are too mean to stir his life one thought;
It was the Crafty Crier . . . I heard that wail . . .

The fire is now wholly out, so that the cottage is absolutely dark and nothing whatever is visible.

THE VOICE (*near at hand*).

Ohohey! Ohey!

THORGERD (*fiercely*).

Where are you . . . O, the Crier is heaving o'er . . .

A gust of wind and rain is heard to sweep into the cottage through the open doorway, shifting the rustling floor-rushes as though feet touched them.

BLANID (*being heard to start to her feet*).

There is another breathing in the house . . .
He is here . . . this darkness is not black enough,
The darkness at light's core alone could hide me . . .
Grope for my hand — hold fast and take me home . .

She is heard to sink to the ground again.

THE OLD STRANGE MAN.

Sister of that old race dead in the hills,
Why will you make me come to you once more?
You know you must go down a long withdrawing
To reach the unlit places of your heart
Which are the night within my unknown eyes
Beyond all stars; so let me touch you once.

A body is heard to drag itself through the rushes.

BLANID.

Mistress, I am your thrall; you will keep your own . . .
I clasp your feet, I kiss your clutching feet,
I lick your feet all over with my tongue,
I will tell you somewhat that will yield a vengeance
For you to work; so do not let me go . . .

THE OLD MAN.

I see you, you white terror with shaking flanks,
Straining to feel me with your hard-shut eyes,
But now I need you not . . . not yet . . . not yet . . .
Your man is drowned and this is it who bargained
Its death for his; will you not give it to me?

THORGERD (*laughing*).

I am glad he is dead; now I may only love him,
And know no more that last distress of stooping
So far from me as this at my feet must be —
No vengeancing could pay for thoughts of her:
I will not know that such can be in life,
So I will neither yield nor succour her.

She speaks no more, nor moves.

THE OLD MAN.

Give it to me; it is mine, give it to me;
I cannot take it while it touches you.

A silence.

I have slain him and I fear to go to him . .
Put out my eyes and rope me with the dogs—
Nay, strangle me to-morrow, but save me now.

THE OLD MAN (*his voice growing fainter and fainter*).

Ah, come, you daughter of an ancient earth,
Come down among the folk your heart can know,
You darling of the past, you long-dead queen.
Your aged soul is strange among these men,
As strange as it would be in Paradise,
But once I knew you ere you were begot
And in the unchanging silence of my heart
There waits a star for you to finish it.

A silence.

You little trembler of a dew-drop dawn,
You are as old as water that makes new dew
And when the dew falls it runs down to peace.
The end of sorrow is in sorrow's heart
With those who loved and knew the unknown end
Of mothering you a thousand years ago.
Come, then, from her who shapes new pangs for you,
And rest and rest and rest for evermore.

A silence.

One day you will awake and call to me
And I shall listen for the doubting cry

Until the stars have worn the sky too thin,
And I am drowned within the light beyond . . .

His voice is lost in the gradual wail of a gust of wind; then it is heard outside and afar.

Ohey!

BLANID (*speaking at longer and longer intervals*).

O, you have saved me from such evil things
As writhed like tangled tree-roots outside space
Ere God made Himself from them; and for it
My Virgin shall reach down from God's two knees
Whereon She sits, and kiss you for Her own;
My body was yours — now you have saved my soul
My soul is utterly yours to serve in living,
To clothe your soul and be your very heart
In love and soft unconscious giving of life.
Mother, I have done evil — punish me;
Because we loved him, love me and punish me:
I have sinned, I have parted lovers — be cruel to me
And cleanse me that I may keep near you two . . .
Think in how many ways you can torture me,
Let me rake up the fire and heat an iron
For you to have your will upon my body —
One thigh is yet unseared . . . Will you not speak? . . .
I love him, I tell you . . . I love him, I love him, I love
him . . .
I kissed his hand; do you hear? I kissed his hand —

Our Hialti's hand . . . I 'll make you hurt me yet,
Cold anger is shuddering down your tense thighs;
Feel, this is your foot upon my upturned face,
I lift it across my eyes, wide-open eyes —
Bear down and crush them full of eternal night . . .
Speak to me now . . . O, will you never speak?
You thrust me down into that Crier's bosom;
For in your heart you make me be unborn
Within a lonely place you never heard of,
Yet if I loose your feet he will return
And I must follow and follow and follow and follow
Past where my imaged thoughts repeat the world,
Till shattered waters break the imaged dream . . .
You saved me once; will you undo that greatness? . . .
We are the tears that God wipes from His eyes;
Lone thoughts will thrust me forth — save me from them . .
Ah, but my lonely love can succour me.
Think, if I drown, 'tis to my Hialti's arms
To cast you from his heart for evermore —
He will not even know you are forgotten . . .
Sister . . . . . Thorgerd . . . . .

THORGERD *draws in a long breath so sharply that it sounds to stab her repeatedly.*

Ay, you will hate me as you used to do —
Will you not hate me as you used to do?
I was so happy when you still could hate me . . .
I fear it, but you make me go . . . Speak once . . .

After a long silence BLANID *is heard to rise and go slowly to the door.*

BLANID.

Ohey! Ohey!

THE VOICE.

Ohohey!

With a laugh of abandonment BLANID *is heard to run into the night; there is a brief silence; then one far-off long shriek is heard from her.*

THE VOICE (*for the last time*).

Ohey! Ohohey!

In the cottage the sound of a heavily, unconsciously falling body is heard; after that nothing at all happens any more.

When the play-house lights waken again, the curtain is found to have descended silently, unknown to the audience.

The Bibelot

THE *name of Mr. J. H. Pearce is, notwithstanding his authorship of some ten volumes,*[1] *almost as little known as that of Mr. Gordon Bottomley whose* Crier by Night *we reprinted last month. He has been likened to Maeterlinck in his* Drolls from Shadowland, (*1893*) *and* Tales from the Masque, (*1894*) *from which* The Dreamer's Book: Being Fantasies and Daydreams Dealing Mainly with the Illusions and Disillusions of Life, (*1905*), *is a selection of material together with "a few fantasies of somewhat later date."*

The five "Drolls" we have chosen are certainly among the most haunting things known as prose poems. They will, at least, suffice to give an idea of their author's capacity which in his latest book seems to have become imbued with a greater sadness as he has grown older.

The spirit of the Fioretti — of the Franciscan monk of blessed memory — transfigures

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[1] *Mr. Pearce's literary adventures consist of the following novels and short stories together with titles above given:* Ezekiel's Sin, Jaco Treloar, Youth Goes A-Marketing, Eli's Daughter, Inconsequent Lives, Esther Pentreath, *and* Bernice.

with an everlasting love The Little Crow of Paradise. Of a Year and a Day *one comes to think that the late J. M. Synge might have signed it. It has a Celtic eeriness of that mirk midnight into which the dead sweetheart leads her sometime lover. Again in* The Puppets *the theme is developed to a well-nigh intolerable degree of poignancy. The last of our selections,* The Veil of Mâyâ, *should have the quotation prefixed to it which Mr. Pearce places in the forefront of* The Dreamer's Book:

"*The world is Mâyâ, is illusion, says Cankara: It is a world of shadows, not of realities, says Plato: It is appearance only, not the thing in itself, says Kant.*"

Of the entire five "Drolls" only The Man Who Desired to be a Tree *ends with a touch of cosmic joy. "Let me, O Master, remain as I am!" It is easy to conceive that many might be called to these mimes of middle-aged melancholy but that few could or would be chosen to abide with them. It is seldom permitted the greatest, even, to so play upon our heartstrings: perhaps it is well that the secret of such improvisations should remain with them.*

FOR NOVEMBER:

ALEXANDER SMITH: AN ESSAY

BY JAMES SMETHAM.

THE LITTLE CROW OF PARADISE
AND OTHER FANTASIES
By
J. H. PEARCE.

I.

THE LITTLE CROW OF PARADISE.

ON the walls of heaven there dwells a little black crow: and this is the tale of how his happiness was attained.

Once a year, as we know, the robin goes to hell, bearing a drop of water in its beak. The water is for some poor soul in torment whom the robin loves in spite of his sins: the power to take the journey and to return from it unscathed, having been granted by Christ to the robin for its kindness to Him when He hung upon the cross.

But to no other bird is this grace extended; and into their songs there creeps, in consequence, a strangely sorrowful note.

Now the crow at the crucifixion — he has been the Devil's bird always — did nothing but cry mockingly, *Ha! ha! ha!* And though he could speak then as well as you or I — the Devil having granted him the gift of speech — ever since that day when he mocked the Saviour he has been reduced to a hoarse and melancholy *caw*.

But not all the crows have a cinder for a heart: here and there one has a heart indeed.

And one day such an one loved a man, and loved him faithfully. But the man was so steeped in sins that his soul, when it went to judgment, was as black as the feathers of its one sole friend; and no other portion could be granted to it but hell.

And when the crow heard, swaying in his nest among the elms, that the friend who had fed and fondled him was in torment — with the lidless eyes of Satan fixed unsleepingly upon him — ah, *then* the crow's heart was humanised by sorrow; and he grieved for his friend as a woman might have grieved.

"Will you take him a drop of water?" said the crow to the robin.

"He has done nothing to deserve it," said the robin. "He must thirst."

"Then I will take him a drop of water myself," said the crow.

So he went to the spring among the elm-trees, where the water bubbled coolingly, and with a drop of water in his beak he flew down the world to hell.

As he dipped below the horizon into the dreary world of darkness he could hear, floating up from the fathomless pit beneath him, the lamentable moaning and sighing of

the Lost: and the crow's heart swelled with pity as he listened. That far-off world, with its nest among the elm-trees, he would give up gladly, if he might only ease his friend!

Down the vast black depths the crow sank heavily: down, and ever down, unrestingly downwards; down — down — down — till at last he was in hell.

In the black Pit of Thirst his friend moaned helplessly: his throat and lips parched into horrible blackness, and the sharp brine running through his veins instead of blood.

"Water! Give me water!" he gasped to the crow.

The crow sank down and, alighting on his shoulder, poured the cherished drop of water between the black, parched lips.

"A hundred years of agony have rolled away from me!" gasped the man. "Now caw to me once, that I may remember the woodlands . . ."

"*Caw!*" cried the little black crow; "*Caw! caw!*"

But at that moment the Ancient One — who is of stone and without a heart — thrust his huge claws forward: and the crow was in his palm!

Then God, Who seeth all things, was moved to compassion: and, as His thought became a deed, Satan's huge claws opened and up flew the little crow straight to Paradise; alighting, singed and panting, on the vast gold walls.

Except the dove, no bird has ever entered heaven. The crow might not be admitted to the shining streets of pearl, but within sight of heaven he should live for ever, said the Merciful One. And on the great gold walls, against which the water of life ripples musically, the Little Crow of Paradise still builds his nest.

II.

THE PUPPETS.

THE travelling showman, his box of puppets slung across his shoulder, paused outside the window and looked in with a glance of enquiry.

The mother nodded, and the little lad, sitting on her lap, clapped his hands delightedly, his face radiant with happiness.

So the showman unslung his box and set up his table, and then, one by one, out came the puppets and played their parts, dropping so naturally into the game that it seemed to be shaped by themselves.

The master of the puppets was a squat, white-faced little man, with a long grey beard that fell halfway to his knees, and the mere sight of him — so old beyond memory did he seem — filled the child with wistful interest, and yet with a touch of fear.

"I 'm glad he 's outside the window!" said the child, snuggling to his mother. "I like his dolls, but not him. Will he ever come in?"

And the mother hugged him to her lovingly, and whispered, "N . . o, dear! . . . Not to-day!"

But presently everything else was forgotten in the interest of the show itself.

The daintily-painted dolls, with their gaudy dresses and their fantastic motions, obeyed the slightest touch of the showman with a promptitude that was delightful: dancing or drowsing, sad or merry, at the merest hint on the wires. For the woman, they mimicked humourously the puppets of daily life: the see-saw, the fatuity of the game heightening the illusion. But for the easily-excited child they were no more than so many playful mice. And as they frisked and gambolled merrily on the baize-covered table, their antics so amused him that he laughed until he was tired.

Above everything, now, the little lad desired to have the puppets, that they might play about with him and obey him even more tamely than the cat.

So the young mother, willing to please her first-born if it were possible, beckoned the showman to the window and struck a bargain with him for the puppets. They would amuse the child for a little while, even if presently he should grow tired of them: and

what was a mother for (she argued) except to give with both her hands?

With the box of puppets at his bedside, the child went to bed contentedly, his little brain full of delightful plans for the morrow. And in all his plans the puppets were to dance to him obediently and the game, from beginning to end, was to go just as he wished.

It was a cloudless moonlight night, and through the windows of the nursery the light streamed in with dazzling brilliancy.

Right opposite the panes hung the great yellow moon, so that when the little lad, tossing restlessly in his dreams, chanced to open his eyes in the quiet midnight, it was as if an illuminated lantern were hanging just outside the window, filling his little brain with odd suggestions of a fair.

For a while he lay staring at the big yellow disk, until presently it seemed to be staring back at *him:* as if suddenly in a lantern one should discern a smiling face.

The friendly smile was so distinctly like an invitation to a frolic that the little lad jumped out of bed laughing merrily.

"I'll play with you, Mr. Clown, if you want me to!" he cried.

And at this he was aware of a squeaking and scratching somewhere near him: as if a company of mice were at play behind the wainscot.

Suddenly he clapped his hands with a shrill burst of merriment. Why, of course, it must be the puppets crying to him from their box! They wanted to come out and play with him. And come out and play they should.

He lifted the lid of the box and threw it back with a bang, so that it snapped from the hinges and clattered on the floor.

And at the sound all the puppets began to clamber out of the box — pulling one another back, climbing, tumbling over each other — all eager, so it seemed, to get out and strut in the world.

The great round face looked in on the little company, as the child set out the puppets on the floor, and the glance, if touched with humour, seemed at the same time strangely sad: as if they all were puppets together, the child as much as the dolls.

"As father and mother are in bed," said

the little lad to it, "please will you be Mr. God and see that we play fair? Will you, *please*, Mr. Clown?" he asked, with childish boldness; in his eagerness confusing the ideas in his little brain.

And the great face smiled consentingly through the window-panes: with a hint of the mother in it, and a hint, perhaps, of something more.

"Now we'll begin," said the mannikin, standing there in his little nightgown. "And you must only play as I tell you: all the game is out of my head."

So he began to frolic about with the puppets as if they were children like himself.

At the outset, the game went exactly as he wished: all the puppets humouring him and obedient to his whims. Whether he set them up, or knocked them down, or wished them to be sad or to be merry, so they stood or fell obediently and were merry or sad at will.

But presently a change of some kind seemed to be taking place in the nursery. The puppets began to disregard and jostle the little fellow as if they actually had wills of their own and wished to shape the game

themselves. And at the same time it seemed either that the puppets increased in stature, or else that the night-gowned mannikin, after all, was no bigger than they.

Was it the puppets growing more animated, or the little lad growing more drowsy? He could scarcely hold his own against them, try as hard as he would. It was like a man, in the press of his fellows, giving and taking, taking and giving, yet losing ground persistently and being steadily pushed to the wall.

"I won't play with you, if you don't do as I tell you!" cried the mannikin, who at last was almost entirely thrust outside the game.

At which the puppets burst out laughing, no doubt rudely enough.

"Isn't it, shall *you* play with us?" the little voices squeaked. "Go and play by yourself, Poor Temper! *We* don't want you — don't think we do!"

Then the mannikin appealed angrily to the great face that watched the game.

But the smile on the face had vanished: it had now only watchful eyes.

"I wish you were back in your box!" the mannikin cried crossly. "I 'm tired of the

game, and I'm tired of *you!*" he pouted, stamping his foot fretfully.

"Put us back, if you can!" the puppets laughed mockingly. "We are as good as you, or better. Put us back, if you can!"

So the mannikin turned wistfully to the great face outside the window. "I can't make them play as I want to, they won't any of them do as I tell them. Please, they're not playing fair! Make them, *please*, Mr. God!"

But the great shining face, though it hung there watching him, seemed no more than a mere paper lantern, after all.

Then the little lad pushed up the window-sash tearfully. "Please, Mr. Showman, I want *you!*" he cried into the depths of the night.

And at this he was aware of the grey old showman squatting on the window sill and looking fixedly into the room.

"Yes!" said the showman, "here am I, my little friend."

"I'm tired of them all," said the mannikin, pointing to the dancing puppets. "They won't do as I tell them, any of them! Please, put them away in their box!"

"So tired, are you, my little fretful man?" asked the showman, stepping into the room and seating himself beside the bed. "Why not let them play their game to the end, if they want to? After all, to-morrow what will it matter to you or I? And besides," he added musingly, watching the antics or the puppets, "there is only *one* way to quiet them, when once they are out of the box."

"I 'm tired," said the mannikin, "I want to go to sleep. And I can't go to sleep, with all of them playing except me. Please, Mr. Showman, will you put them in their box?"

The old showman took him up on his knee without a word.

"You are cold," said the mannikin, a drowsiness on his eyes.

"You will sleep none the less sound for it, my little man," said the showman tenderly as his great grey beard fell over the golden hair.

"Your arms hold me so tightly . . . oh, they hurt me!" gasped the mannikin. And then again, and more faintly, came a little tired, "oh!"

When the mannikin was still at last, with a face as white as the sheets of his bed, the

old showman laid him gently in the box on the nursery floor.

The puppets sat on the edge of the box and clicked their heels against it jovially.

"That's another of my puppets broken," squeaked a little voice from somewhere.

It sounded like one of the puppets speaking . . . but, then, what did they consider themselves?

III.

THE MAN WHO DESIRED TO BE A TREE.

THE sunshine streamed across the lush-grassed meadows, and beat down fiercely on the massive oaks and on the elms whose myriad leaves kept fluttering ceaselessly. In the dense covert, formed by the interlacing branches, wee brown songsters had built their nests by scores, and they kept flitting to and fro and trilling joyously as the light breeze stirred the innumerable leaves.

The air was warm, and soft, and pleasant. The green arcades were deliciously cool and moist, full of the drowsy flutter that rippled through the branches, and full also of the delicate fragrance from innumerable budding sprays; and the fresh green foliage was a vision of beauty beyond words. May was in the woodlands, shy and winsome; she had not yet shaken herself free from her day-dreams, and the wonder of her young hopes lingered about her still.

At the foot of a tree, reclining against its roots, lay a lean-visaged student, very shabbily dressed and with patches of thin grey hair around his temples. A volume of the

Faery Queen lay open beside him, but he had for some time ceased to pore over its pages, being engaged instead in chasing Fancy as she flitted hither and thither through the vast green woodland, dallying with the shadows and gossiping with the wind.

His mind's eye revelled in the picturesque suggestions that seemed to him, as he lay here with half-closed lids, to be fleetingly visible, as if in a dream. He was aware of beautiful damsels in gauzy draperies hurrying down the long and dusky avenues with steel-clad knights spurring after in hot pursuit; of grey old monks, cowled and sandalled, moving hither and thither in a world of utter peace; and of dryads and fairies, fauns and satyrs, filling the woodland ways with a dreamy poetry that elsewhere seemed to have drifted out of life.

How delightful it would be to be a denizen of the forest — to be this elm in whose shadow he was lying! he thought.

The huge tent-like shadow deepened and widened with the dropping sun, and the shadows of other sylvan neighbours close at hand — dainty saplings and gnarled old foresters — fell across the nearer margin of the

grass-land in fantastic, almost semi-human outlines: at least, so it seemed to the dreamy student, as he lay here watching the breeze ripple across the grass-blades and listened to the murmur of the forest at his back.

"I should like to be a tree," he sighed lazily and half aloud.

"Would you?" asked a voice from somewhere close to him.

It was a low, caressing, insinuating voice — a voice with a strange seductiveness in its silvery intonation. And instead of feeling startled he felt a sudden wave of happiness as if a beautiful female had breathed upon his cheek.

"Would you?" asked the voice, deliciously flattering him, "*would* you like to be one of us indeed?"

A tree has a life void of trouble, he ruminated. The birds sing to it, and the wind caresses it, and it feels the sunshine, and greatens where it grows. Yes, I should like to be a tree indeed!

"Shall I grant your wish?" asked the voice whisperingly — how exquisitely sweet and soothing it was! — "shall I grant it here and now?" it asked.

The student closed his eyes leisurely to consider; and then, half dreamily, answered, "Yes!"

To be a tree is to be in touch nakedly with Nature; to be stripped of the disguises that have gathered about the man, and to be thrown back blankly into the narrowest groove of life. The student felt the wind and the sun on his branches, and the birds sang joyously, nestling among his leaves; his feet were rooted in the fresh and wholesome earth, and the sap moved sluggishly in his rough-barked trunk.

It was a calm and deeply drowsy existence; but the restlessness and the curiosity of humanity were in him still, and at first his primitive tenement filled him only with wonder.

But when the quiet night descended on the woodland, and the cooling dews slid stealthily into his pores, the great peace that comes with the darkness gradually enveloped him, and to the rustling of his leaves he fell healthily asleep.

He was awakened by the gracious dawn and the wholesome breath of the morning, by the glory and wonder of the sunrise and

the jubilant singing of birds. And had it not been for the dew-crumpled volume that now lay blotched and smirched at his feet, he would have forgotten his manhood and the unquiet life of cities and would have looked for his brothers only among the trees.

But so long as the volume lay there forlornly, so long he remembered, and had something to regret.

But the days passed leisurely — he could now keep no count of them — and human speech and human passions dropped away from his memory as quietly as his own ripe leaves began to drop. And the tree's life narrowed to its narrow round of needs.

It sheltered the birds, and it took the wind's kisses gladly, and it caught the snows in the wrinkles and twists of its boughs; and the squirrel nested in it, and the wood-mouse nibbled at it; and its life sufficed it, answering its desires.

* * * * * *

One day there swept a mighty storm across the forest: the thunder crashed and the lightning flashed continuously; and the

whole land held its breath, listening to the uproar.

The Lord of the Forest was moving among his children: and some of them he passed without injuring or despoiling them; but others he smote wrathfully, so that he rent them and they died.

And when he came to the tree that had one-time been the student, he remembered, and desired to bestow on it a boon.

And he said to the elm, now gnarled and wrinkled, "You shall be a man again, if you earnestly desire it — but this time to be a man finally, till you die."

The tree heard the great wind roaring among its brethren, and it was aware of the wee birds cowering among its boughs; and it remembered, as in a flash, the weary life of humanity, with hopes to befool it and despair for its reward: and it rustled its myriad leaves whispering mournfully, "Let me, O Master, remain as I am!"

And the Lord of the Forest was content, and passed on.

IV.

A YEAR AND A DAY.

One November day, when they had been married about a twelvemonth, there came to the door a strange-looking girl and asked the master if they were in want of a servant.

The mistress had just had her first baby and was still weak, though her heart was good, and the master, after asking the girl a few questions, said to the mistress, Well . . . he thought they might engage her.

"I don't altogether like her look," said the mistress; for the girl's peaked face was so white and still that, if it hadn't been for her eyes, one would have taken her for a corpse.

"I can sew and knit, and there isn't a bit of housework I can't manage, and I can milk and make butter with the best," said the girl.

And the master remarked again that he thought they might try her; she seemed to be strong and willing, for all she looked so pale.

"And I love children," added the girl, glancing wistfully at the baby; "I can quiet them however fretful they may be."

The infant in the mother's arms had been crying lustily for a minute or two, and hush it as she might she was unable to quiet it.

But now the girl fixed on it her great, mournful eyes and began to hum softly some old-world lullaby; and almost as soon as her lips began to move the little one blinked and closed its eyes, and there it lay peacefully asleep.

That settled the matter as far as the mistress was concerned.

"Well, I'm willing to engage you," said she to the girl.

But the master said nothing. He was watching the girl strangely out of the corners of his eyes.

"If you engage me," was the answer, "it must be for a year and a day."

"Very well," said the mistress, who was admiring the baby sleeping so peacefully in her arms; "and what wages will you want?"

"Oh, I don't want money, it would be of no use to me. Let me have anything that may take my fancy on the night I'm leaving."

"Anything you may fancy? Well, I agree to that."

"You agree to it too?" asked the girl of the master.

"Yes . . . I agree to it . . . if the mistress does," said he. And all the time he couldn't take his eyes off the girl. "What's your name?" he asked her, watching her closely.

The girl dropped her head: "Piggy-widden," was the reply.

"What a ridiculous name for a servant! I shall call you Peggy," said the mistress.

The girl glanced at the master; but the latter held his tongue: so Peggy she became without further protest.

Peggy proved a perfect treasure in the house: early and late she was scouring and cleaning, and it was impossible to find fault with her in a single thing.

Or, at any rate, so the master thought. But the mistress thought the girl looked too often at the master (who had been a bit wild in his day, though he had sobered down since his marriage), and possibly the mistress was not far wrong.

Go where the master would the girl's eyes followed him. Yet she never addressed him, unless compelled to do so, and made no attempt to attract his attention. Always

sparing of her speech, and always with that deathly pallor on her countenance, the girl moved about as noiselessly as a ghost: her great, mournful eyes apparently fixed on vacancy (unless the master happened to be near), and all her faculties seemingly sunk in torpor, except for the mechanical needs of the moment. Yet the master seemed oddly attracted towards her. His eyes sought her still, white face persistently, whenever it was possible to get a glimpse of her; and when their glances met, the girl would hold him with her eyes with a control so uncanny that the master would shiver chilly, as if ice were in his blood.

At last the term of the girl's engagement drew to an end: on the morrow she would have served them a twelvemonth and a day.

As she sat by the big turf fire in the evening, playing with the baby that crowed upon her lap, the wife began to speculate, with languid indifference, on what the girl would ask for her wages. Would it be clothes, or china, or goods from the linen-chest? Or perhaps it would be the baby's silver christening-cup, which she had once or twice seen the girl examining when she was cleaning it?

Well, anything, even the cup (though she would be loath to part with this), would be cheap as payment for the girl's services, for a better servant, as far as work was concerned, she could never hope to get. And with that she proceeded to give the baby the breast, and lazily dismissed the subject from her thoughts.

On the morrow came the girl's last day at the farmhouse; and it was All Souls' Eve, and a wild day to boot.

"A poor day for the end of your engagement," said the mistress; "where are you thinking of going to when you leave us?"

"To my home," said the girl.

"And where is that?" asked the mistress.

"Maybe, you 'll be coming there one day," said the girl. "I think I 'll keep its name as a surprise for you."

"Oh, very well; as you please," said the mistress. "What do you want for wages?" she asked her presently.

And at that moment the master entered the kitchen.

"Only a kiss from the master," said the girl.

"You bold young hussy!" cried the mis-

tress, furiously. "Get out of my house this instant, or I'll sweep you out with the broom!"

"I have served a year and a day for my wages," said the girl, "and the master will pay them honestly;" and she held him with her eyes.

"He shan't!" cried the mistress, rushing between them.

"He will," said the girl, in her dull, lifeless tones.

And immediately the master thrust his wife aside and kissed the girl on her unresponsive lips.

"*Now* he's mine!" cried the girl, exultantly: her white face turning to the colour of clay.

The mistress fell back from her with a look of horror; but the master stood still, staring in her eyes.

"Are you Eileen, then?" asked the master, shuddering.

"When the time came I thought you would know me," said the girl.

"But Eileen died . . . ."

"And who says that I am not dead?" asked the girl.

And at that moment the windows and doors began to rattle, as if unseen hands were busy with their fastenings.

"My year and a day is up: I am wanted," said the girl. And she held out her cold, white hand to the master.

The man took it mechanically, and his face began to pale.

"Come!" said the girl, and the door flew open; a sudden icy gust blowing through the kitchen so that the lights went out and the child began to wail.

"It is cold," muttered the master, as she led him to the door.

"It will be colder where we are going," said the girl.

"It is dark."

"It will be darker where we'll have to sleep together."

And out they went into the wild, mirk night.

V.

THE VEIL OF MÂYÂ.

I.

"SHALL I bestow on them this veil?" asked the gracious Presence.

The parents glanced at the babes slumbering peacefully on their mother's knees, and the father stroked his beard as he mused on the question.

"Would it add to their happiness?" the mother asked, wistfully.

"Would it cripple their power to gather knowledge?" quoth the father.

"I have only the veil to bestow," said the Presence. "Its value or its worthlessness they must discover for themselves."

"Let my little daughter wear it," the mother whispered, lovingly.

"I reject it for my son!" said the father, emphatically.

"So be it," said the Presence. Then, flinging the mysterious veil over the daughter, she laid her back in the mother's lap and suddenly disappeared.

II.

The children were as subtly diverse in character as if there were a racial chasm between them: or as if one had been fed on the honey of fairyland and the other on the coarser fair of the trolds.

For the little girl the garden was on the very skirts of Paradise. Playing in its walks she could see the tiny, speckled gnomes hiding in the velvety bells of the foxgloves, and in the hum of the great yellow bees among the honeysuckle she could hear the bugles of the little fairies who were playing among the flowers.

The soft evening clouds, floating lightly along the blue, were the flowing robes of angels who ran playing across the sky: and the vast red sun, just glimpsed between the heights, was a great red giant glaring over the hill-tops ere he finally laid himself down to sleep.

Music the child held as the very voice of God. Its melting strains made wet her little eyelids, and to its joyful notes her feet danced lightly. But when it grew grave, and uttered deep, solemn melodies — ah! then it

was the dear Father grieved in some way, and her little heart would throb with a sympathetic ache.

As she grew up, men and women were always beautiful and wondrous to her. The bowed and wrinkled peasant, to whom the idea of rest was soothing, and the lady, fretted with idleness and as graceful as a flower — they were both of them her sisters, and the pressure of either's hand was sweet.

The traffic in the streets was not the movement of men and women who were bent on business and spurred mainly by the impulse of their needs, but the roaring flood of life solemnly beating out its music in harmony with the vast and grander music of the spheres.

The church was the most precious and most sacred of symbols; she could feel her heart within its precincts in a hundred different ways. And pulpiteers and medicine men, the wranglers in the courts and licensed fighters, all the brigades that wear uniforms she admired most profoundly.

So closely did the veil of Mâyâ hang before her eyes.

III.

But the brother in the flowers sought for the pistils and stamens, and in the trees studied chiefly the delicate structure of the leaves, the development of the buds and branches and the circulation of the sap. For him there was no dryad in the trunk of the oak tree, but only the juices of the earth and the nutriment of the sunshine built into the sylvan monster and traceable in its cells.

The church, with its ritual, had grown up around the altar, as the house, with domestic economy, had grown up around the hearth: and the central stone of the one, in spite of the embroidery of its keepers, was no whit more divine than the central stone of the other. The bishop in his black apron, and the cook in his white one, they were allied in occupation and were on an equality in their cult.

The streets were full of combative human beings, each man hungering and thirsting for the satisfaction of his needs. And society was not something inexpressibly beautiful, devised and pre-ordained by the wisdom of a god: it was a mere affair of balance, with

weights that were fraudulent in their denominations and with blind Chance constantly meddling with the beam.

IV.

Every one loved and admired the girl, and when she grew to womanhood she had suitors by the dozen, and the glamour of love was heavy on her heart.

Her parents being dead, she married a gay young officer whose exterior and manners had fascinated her strongly. From the charm of these she divined that his heart was as an angel's — as unspotted as a lily and as innocent as a child.

In vain her brother had endeavoured to dissuade her from this folly: she had so often been told that he was a mere blind materialist, that it seemed to her that here his judgment must be worthless.

"I am sorry to differ from you on this point," said she: "but I feel that here I must obey my own heart."

Tom shook his head sadly. "You will find it merely flesh and blood."

"Is love nothing more, then, than a matter of cells and molecules?"

Her brother wisely held his peace.

Meanwhile Tom in the great orchestra of life had with difficulty been finding his instrument and his note. And now that these were found he sat down to play his part. No illusions did he cherish — not even as to himself — men were men and women women; and the pit of death was deep.

V.

The years sped on and Ellie was a broken-hearted woman.

Her husband, thinking more of life's pleasures than of its duties, had taken many perilous steps, and at last had made a fatal one. A week ago "the honourable and gallant gentleman" had been sentenced at the Old Bailey for a most heartless seduction, and he now wore a suit with the broad arrow stamped on it, instead of the gaily-coloured cloths and embroideries of his trade.

And to-night poor Ellie, with this shadow hanging over her, lay helpless under the curse of Eve.

VI.

Death sat in his gloomy watch-tower in the belfry, where the dust was thick and the bats hung in clusters, and looked down sadly on the rain-beaten graves.

Presently he conned his fatal list of names.

"To-night the twins!" he muttered in his beard.

Then with heavy steps he descended from the belfry and passed out into the slowly-gathering gloom.

"The veil of Mâyâ I shall strip from her at last!" muttered he; and a sombre fire began to smoulder in his eyes.

But, behold! another Form was in the room before him: the grave and gracious Presence that had bestowed on her the veil.

"She will pass with the veil wrapped closely around her," said the Presence to the grim black Shape as he entered.

And as Death laid his hand on her heart and froze it, he was aware that through it all the veil floated before her vision, and in it she saw heaven, and through it she saw her god.

"To the last the prey of illusions!" muttered Death.

"Even *your* coming it has sweetened for her!" said the Presence.

"Has it?" said the Shape: "you will see if her brother will tremble at me. Yet the veil of Mâyâ has never shrouded *him*."

To the brother's room went the Shape, and laid its hand upon his brain.

"So the end has come, then — the end thus early!" And Tom drowsed in his chair, and as he drowsed he dreamed confusedly; the life flickered out, and in the chair he lay a clod.

VII.

As Death climbed back to his lair in the belfry and lay down in the darkness in the thick, foul dust, he mused perplexedly on this veil of Mâyâ, of which men think so much but which counts for so little in the end.

"With, or without it, there is life: and with, or without it, all must face me. Has it any use, then, after all?" mused Death.

And with that he fell asleep, leaving the problem still unsolved.

The Bibelot

THERE is an old-fashioned atmosphere about this essay (1868) which is eloquent of the lapse of time and change in sentiment, separating us alike from its author and its subject. James Smetham, until his letters and literary works were published some eighteen years ago, was one of the Preraphaelite group, but of a name nearly faded from remembrance. During the last ten years of Smetham's life it is a tragic phase to think of him as an artist whose pencil was laid aside, whose hand had lost its cunning, but there is this inscription upon his grave: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

As for Alexander Smith, he, too, has become one of the "spent fames and fallen lights" so long ago even as the date of Smetham's critical estimate. We know from one of Rossetti's letters that he was pleased with this performance; "as just in criticism as it is excellent in style and rich in imagery."

Smith, who died in 1868, "the prey of overwork," came suddenly into his own with the issue of The Life Drama *(1853). He somewhat expanded his poetical outlook in* City

Poems (*1857*), *and in his one play,* Edwin of Deira (*1861*). *But, whatever may have been the estimate of the passionate few, we are come to a period of the dispassionate many, and he is only known now as the author of* Dreamthorp: A Book of Essays Written in the Country (*1863*), *which is still an ideal book for fireside companionship. "Poet and Essayist" was the epitaph chosen for him, and as essayist he will remain as he desired: "To be occasionally quoted is the only fame I care for."*

If Dreamthorp *contains his most enduring work,* Last Leaves *has also an assured value, although it would appear that few editions have been called for in the forty years since publication. A single passage from his remarks on Hazlitt may be cited as an example of his style, both as a "forerunner" of Stevenson and for its own high level of critical excellence: "It is almost pathetic to notice how he clings to the peaceful images which the poets love; how he reposes in their restful lines. . . . He is continually quoting Sidney's Arcadian image of the* shepherd-boy under the shade, piping as though he would never grow old, *—as if the recurrence of the image to his memory brought with it silence, sunshine, and waving trees."*

ALEXANDER SMITH: AN ESSAY

By

JAMES SMETHAM.

We cannot refrain from singling out a highly amusing note connected with his visit to Miss Martineau. "Miss Martineau, it is otherwise well known, is a little infirm of hearing. When the travellers arrived, several ladies were with her, and by the little circle of petticoats they were received with some *empressement*. Mr. Nichol took up the running, and some little conversation proceeded, Smith, in the racing-phrase, *waiting*. Presently he 'came with a rush,' and observed it 'had been a very fine day'—an unimpeachable and excellent remark which brought him instantly into difficulties. Miss Martineau was at once on the *qui vive*. The poet had made a remark probably instinct with fine genius, and worthy of the author of *The Life Drama*. 'Would Mr. Smith be so good as to repeat what he had said?' Mr. Smith—looking, no doubt, uncommonly like an ass—repeated it in somewhat a higher key. Alas! alas! in vain. The old lady shook her head. 'It was really *so* annoying, but she did not quite catch it; would Mr. Smith be *again* so good?' and her hand was at her eager ear. The unhappy bard, feeling, as he said, in his distress as if suicide might be the thing, shrieked and again shrieked his little piece of information—symptoms of ill-suppressed merriment becoming obvious around him. Finally the old lady's ear-trumpet was produced, and proceeding to shriek through this instrument, of which the delicate use was unknown to him, the bard nearly blew her head off."

ALEXANDER SMITH.[1]

THOUGH the habit of reviewing on insufficient material is to be deprecated, it is not necessary, when we make our observations on a book which has interested us, that we should be able to stand an examination in all the works of the author we review. The *Last Leaves* of Alexander Smith has afforded pleasant reading in some holiday hours, and as it has awakened many thoughts concerning past impressions of the works of Alexander Smith, and of the school to which he belonged, a few remarks will here be offered of a discursive rather than very seriously critical character. These *Last Leaves* are interesting, and may be welcomed. They include a short memoir of Alexander Smith by his friend, Patrick Proctor Alexander, who is known by a volume on *Mill and Carlyle* — the parody on Carlyle being a clever and amusing extravaganza. There is an oval portrait — taken

[1] This essay was written as a review of "Last Leaves; Sketches and Criticisms, by Alexander Smith, edited, with a Memoir, by P. P. Alexander." It was published in the *London Quarterly Review*, October 1868.

evidently from a photograph of the subject of the memoir — a sturdy, honest face, with beard and moustache, a solid square brow, over eyes which seem to have a "cast" in them, not to the extent of being disagreeable, though "there is something about it so very peculiar." We often see a civil engineer or a public official with such a physique and such a walking-stick — a man decisive, direct, good-humoured, not to be trifled with, putting everything by a touch into its right place. But such a presence is the last kind of personality which the youth Byron-and-Shelley-smitten, who turned down interesting collars in hope of the Muse alighting on them to whisper fairy-like into his ear, would have attributed to the chief of what was called "The Spasmodic School." Music and passion and self-questioning and the questioning of the universe are not by the mass of active men thought to be compatible with hard-headedness; and yet there are many instances in which they are met with in close alliance, so close indeed that the poem is never published, and the "questionings are all settled by a happy marriage and a prosperous middle age."

The great unwritten poems no doubt are more than those which are on record, as "the night of time far exceedeth the day." Poetry is no such speciality as it might appear. Happy he for the most part who can deter himself from turning his poetry into verse, and, above all, who has the fortitude to keep it from the loud acclaim and the fossilising power of the press. Whether this remark applies fairly to *The Life Drama*, is more than we should be desirous of affirming. The public of ten years ago did not think this. Men of middle age will remember when, having passed their exultant youth, they were entering on their golden manhood, while, the mind not yet closed to anything new in the way of imaginative literature, there was a sudden floating into the vacant spaces of its upper skies of a group of starry poets.

Festus, and *Balder*, and *The Life Drama*, were themes inexhaustible for young scholars, young barristers, and young ladies of taste and sensibility. Whether their writers were real poets, strong poets, poets whose works would last, was the question. There was a great variety of replies. The younger

folk were rapturously delighted; and probably many a now sober-minded critic first rushed into the field, and threw down his glove in defence of these lately risen stars. In confessing our own position towards them, we must honestly say that we were not carried off our feet by the rush. Whether we really ever read *The Life Drama*, and *Balder*, and *The Roman*, in any way giving them a fair hearing, we dare not at this distance of time undertake to affirm. We had voted for Tennyson before Tennyson was much heard of. Thin, little, gray first editions in country libraries had won our heart; falling on the receptive tenderness of early youth the silver melodies would not readily turn out to make room for others. The *Ode to a Nightingale*, and *To a Grecian Urn*, and *Hyperion*, had established themselves in the memory and imagination, moving reverently round the granitic and unquestioned monuments of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, and the substantial pile which Wordsworth had almost finished building, and not rudely walking by the shrines of Byron and Shelley, or disturbing that schoolboy reverence for

the "grassy barrows" of the elder world, near which we breathed a severer air, and felt impulses more stately, solemn, and subdued. We did not, therefore, throw up our cap to greet the newcomers, any more than we received them with a disobliging air. The poet who was "greater than Keats in the very qualities in which Keats is finest," and "whose poems were in no respect inferior to those of the Laureate," did not strike us as being quite *that*. And yet our impression is, that there was in them much beauty and music and pathos and possible power for those who, being on the proper level of age, might have "need of such vanity." And therefore we could, without violently wheeling round, see the sudden eclipse of the rising fame, and to some extent join in the good-humoured laugh created by *Firmilian*. Here, again, we are surprised to find how familiar a thing may, in a sense, become to us without our having gone through the labour of careful perusal.

We should be sorry to commit ourselves to the assertion that we ever properly read *Firmilian*. This, however, we are very sure of, that it was thought very witty, and that

it was a "telling hit" against the "Spasmodic School." Wendell Holmes truly says that "society is a strong infusion of books," and but for the staining power of the infusion of that time we should not have been able to enter with so much interest into the volume under notice. We caught the current temper of the hour; helped, no doubt, to pass the catchword which did more harm than the criticism; but, not having been seriously compromised, we can now brush away the unfallen tear as we sigh over these fallen *Last Leaves*, and see how "the whirligig of time brings in his revenges." The brief biography of Alexander Smith is soon told, and another sigh is added by the man who turns aside to see his grave, as he thinks in how small a space is compressed concerning most even able men all we need to know.

He was born at Kilmarnock on the last day of 1829. His father was a pattern designer, who gave him a good education, and brought him up to his own calling. His power and will to *read* was early developed, and in English literature he was "an unusually well-read man even among men

professedly literary." The biographer says that it was proposed to educate him for the ministry, but seems to think it no great cause for regret that he did not become "a parson," for that "there seems no special reason to suppose he would have shone as a pulpit orator." The biographer's very cursory glance at the subject, and his view of the nature of the disqualification, suggest a wonder as to what the conception of such a man may be in regard of a vocation to the Christian ministry.

Alexander Smith did not shine in pattern designing, but no doubt pursued his work steadily, writing poems in the interval of business, and sending them to the "Poets' Corner" of the *Glasgow Citizen*. In time he forwarded a bundle of poems to George Gilfillan, who, whatever may be the depth or strength of his own gifts, had, as we judged by his criticism of those days met with here and there, a generous, warm, and enthusiastic greeting to give to any young poet who showed reasonable promise of excellence — reminding one of the fervour and nobility of mind with which Christopher North wrote his fine rhapsodies of praise.

No wonder that the poet should retain a grateful sense of the critic's kindness in the furtherance of his interests at the commencement of his career. *The Life Drama* appeared first in the pages of *The Critic*, then accessible to Gilfillan and his protégés; it was afterwards separately published, and Alexander Smith "found himself famous."

One of the pleasant accidents of periodical and discursive literature is the amber-like power it has of embalming the "strays" of the world of mind. In this short memoir of the poet there is an amusing and graphic sketch of "an original," who, at this time and as long as he lived, was the most intimate of the poet's friends. His name was Hugh Macdonald. He was an enthusiastic and vigorous Celt, who never condescended to English (though not for want of acquaintance with it), a factory operative, who by the path of natural history and poetry — that of poetry being represented chiefly by his reverential regard to Burns — emerged into a higher level and mixed with better company than that to which he was born. It is greatly to the credit of Alexander Smith's good sense and general strength

that he should be so constant in his attachment to one who in regard to his poetry could use habitually and unhesitatingly such language as the following:—

I like ye weel, Sandy, and that ye weel ken; but as for yer *poetry* as ye ca't, I mak' but little o't. It *may* be poetry. I'm no sayin' it is na. The *creetics* say it's poetry, an' nae doot *they* suld ken—but it's no *my* kind o' poetry. Jist a blatter o' braw words, to my mind, an' bit whirly-whas they ca' *eemages*. I can mak' neither head nor tail o't.

The biographer says—

It became part of the regular programme, at some time or other of the evening, to skilfully lead the conversation up to a discussion of Smith's claims, when Macdonald never failed *in effect* to deliver himself with trenchant emphasis as above, however the tune might be played with lively and ingenious variations. Smith seemed always to enjoy quite as heartily as any one else, what should have been his own discomfiture, and shortly after the two oddly-assorted companions would go off into the night together.

Macdonald wrote songs and sang them in tunes, largely, "of his own composing;" and in knowledge of the habits of birds and insects, the growth of trees and flowers, and in all that lore which is so useful to the poet, he seems to have been deeply

versed — reminding one of that strange being belonging to the Emersonian circle, Thoreau, to whom surely the lines in Emerson's *Wood Notes* must refer —

> And such I knew, a forest seer,
> A minstrel of the natural year,
> Foreteller of the vernal ides,
> Wise harbinger of spheres and tides;
> A lover true who knew by heart
> Each joy the mountain dales impart;
> It seemed that nature could not raise
> A plant in any secret place,
> In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
> Beneath the grass that shades the rill,
> Under the snow, beneath the rocks,
> In damp fields known to bird and fox;
> But he would come in the very hour
> It opened in its virgin bower,
> As if a sunbeam showed the place,
> And tell its long descended race;
> It seemed as if the breezes brought him,
> It seemed as if the sparrows taught him;
> As if by secret sight he knew
> Where in far fields the orchis grew.
> There are many events in the field
> Which are not shown to common eyes;
> But all her shows did nature yield
> To please and win this pilgrim wise.
> He saw the partridge drum in the woods,
> He heard the woodcock's evening hymn,
> He found the tawny thrush's broods,
> And the shy hawk did wait for him.

> What others did at distance hear,
> And guessed within the thicket's gloom,
> Was showed to this philosopher,
> And at his bidding seemed to come.

And, as an instance of this, the succeeding characteristic and, to our mind, beautiful touch of poetic life is worth transcribing. "Once, as we were pacing quietly along a wooded stretch of the river-side, he broke out suddenly, 'Od, but he's a queer fallow that!' and, catching on the instant our surprise — no soul being visible in the landscape to whom the remark would apply — he added, 'It's that chiel, Tennyson, I'm speakin' o'. Hark ye baith noo,' and in his very best English manner he went on to quote —

> " 'Why lingers she to clothe her heart with love,
> Delaying, *as the tender ash delays*
> *To clothe herself when all the woods are green.*

" 'Ye mind it, Sandy! it's i' the *Princess*. An' noo, look ye, *that's* an ash' — pointing with his staff — 'may be ye think it's an elm, Sandy! but it's no an elm, it's an ash, *an deil a leaf on't;* see ye na? an *a' the ither trees are oot.* I didna need ony o' yer

Tennysons to tell *me* that — but neither o' *ye* kent it, I reckon. He's nae poet, I'll aye say that; but I'se alloo ye'll no aften find him wrang wi' his flooers, an' his trees, an' things — *he* kens them, Sandy! an' *ye* dinna. But ye're nae poets, neither tane nor t'ither o' ye.' " *Indeed*, the poet of poets to him — Shakespeare, with much reluctance, excepted — was "Rabbie" Burns.

The publication of *The Life Drama*, as has been said, raised the poet into instant fame; and, when it is recollected that at the time of its publication he was not more than two-and-twenty, this was, no doubt, a marvellous achievement. In estimating the works of men *as* works, we apply the more abstract standard; but in estimating a *career*, it is well to pause and remember the circumstances under which the given results are produced. It is true that Alfred Tennyson was young when he first began to publish his verse, but the youthful opportunities of Tennyson far exceeded those of Alexander Smith. An early life of education and leisure in a rural parsonage was passed under the influence of a father, himself a man of great accomplishments and learning,

> The seven elms — the poplars four,
> That stood beside his father's door,

grew in the sweet air of the tranquil wolds where "every sound is sweet," where the doves moan in "firry woodlands," and the brook, with its "matted cress and ribbed sand," winds among anemones and violet-banks — beauties worthily celebrated in his *Ode to Memory*, and not exaggerated by the poet's fancy. He had a college education, and in what company and under what glorious influences let the *Memorials of Arthur Hallam*, and the wonderful threnody of *In Memoriam*, best tell. And yet, when first his silken sail was launched out into the open sea, there were many imperfections seen in the rig of his vessel. "Rusty, Crusty, Christopher," who had an eye for such craft, was able to spy out as many youthful defects as Captain Cap in *The Pathfinder* saw in the vessels of Lake Ontario. Byron was young when he published his *Hours of Idleness;* but he was high-born and was college-bred when they were written, and when his hours were changed by the rod of Brougham into *Hours of Indignation*. So with Shelley. And even from the preco-

ciousness of Keats — who was far from being the boy "born over a stable" which the careless phrase would suggest — the "tartarly" *Quarterly* struck out a plentiful mirth — all long since blackened into the merest forgotten tinder. If we remember the town birth, the modest education, the business ties of Alexander Smith, up to the period when, with no large experience of life in any form, he wrote *The Life Drama*, it will greatly modify and guide our appreciation of the native potentialities of the man. That he should not know overmuch of details which hide in the woods, bask in the fields, and glance along the streams, is no wonder, if we have seen Glasgow, and remember that he was designing patterns *there*.

That he should have lifted his eyes to the stars and the sun, and heard the "far seas moan as a single shell" in the ear of his imagination, should have heard the winds sweep in the wynds of the manufacturing town, and been haunted by them, and reproduced them with great effect again and again, was what might have been expected from such a youth so born and nurtured.

But the critics, alas! knew too much and too little. He must have been a strong youth to overtop the influences that surrounded him, and produce a work which, for a while, constituted a large section of the critics into a "Spasmodic School" of rapture. His biographer interjects a happy quotation —

> These violent delights have violent ends,
> And in their triumph die,

as they did ere long.

There seems to be something in the Scottish genius which gives to it the power of sustaining the shock of sudden fame more manfully than the English genius sustains it. The pleasant account in Allan Cunningham's *Life of Wilkie* of the way in which the youth of twenty-one bore one of the most violent hurricanes of applause which ever threatened to dash a young painter in pieces, is worth comparing with the account now given of the way in which Alexander Smith bore up under the Parnassian tornado. The writer says: "Some little show of elation might here very well have been excused to him, but I should be

surprised if any one could say he ever saw in him the smallest trace of such a thing." This fact increases the consideration and respect with which we read anything he produced, and will probably induce many a man, who did not succumb to *The Life Drama* when it first appeared, to return to it with a new light upon its pages, now that the drama of the life of its author is concluded, and

> The monument above his bones,
> And aye-remaining lamps,

are set up and kindled.

One flash in the brief life of personal enjoyment of the results of fame is recorded. He received his first £100, and, on the strength of it, he went with John Nichol to the Lakes and to London, making various literary acquaintance — Herbert Spencer, Lewes, Helps, Miss Martineau, and others. He also became, for a week, the guest of the Duke of Argyle at Inveraray Castle. All this was what any reasonable young poet, of the spasmodic or any other school, might fairly call success. If he did not enjoy these two great phases of fame — the

applause of the critics and the favourable personal regard of the gifted and the ennobled — there was little of very tangible enjoyment of it to be procured or expected. He had, and we may hope he relished, both.

After this interlude, it was needful that he should turn to consider his future way of life and "means to live." After a little desultory work for the press, he obtained the secretaryship to the Edinburgh University, which he retained till his death. The emolument was small (£150 a year), but it would have sufficed if he had remained single. This he did not do. He married in 1857 a Miss Flora Macdonald, from the Isle of Skye; settled "at Wardie, near Granton;" and there the remainder of his quiet life was passed. His family increased; his few chosen friends went in and out; his remaining poems, tales, and essays appeared one after another. The first splendours of his fame were obscured by the attack of Aytoun, and by the laborious assault on his alleged "plagiarisms," the work of some one with more memory than wit, and who surely has regretted the pains he took since he

learned by whom the poems were written — at what age, and under what circumstances. A valuable appendix by the biographer gives a fair consideration to the question, which ought never to have been so strongly agitated; his main point being that, to subject rigidly any of our great modern poets to the same treatment, would be to expose them to the same frivolous charge. Having said thus much, we become conscious that of Alexander Smith's life there is little more to say. His means needed more and more constant replenishing as his expenses increased. His work — only varied by a yearly visit of a month to Skye — became more and more close and exhausting. The daily routine of his post at the University became yearly more dull and wearisome, till he was disposed to contemplate sheep-farming in Skye as an alternative. Then, like Hugh Miller, as it seems to us, the prey of overwork, he became at length its victim and died — "a kindly Scot," loved and lamented by all who knew him.

The *Last Leaves*, to which the memoir is prefixed, consist of nine essays and two poems, pleasant to read, and over which we

now purpose to glance. "Scottish Ballads" is the title of the first of them. A slight historic introduction, picturesquely arranged, shows that the ballads which have been handed down to arrest the ear and cause sometimes the eyes to fill with tears, were not the productions of the troubadour or paid minstrel of the court or the hall, whose works are described as being chiefly of the "begging-letter species," eloquent and witty, but not issuing in any great pecuniary results. They got for the most part as their reward, what the wealthy often give, so says the *Autocrat of the Breakfast-table*, to those who are personally hired to amuse them, the "funny-bone," and had to subsist on it as they could. The ballads were composed and sung in the beginning by gaberlunzies who roved the country, and sometimes by moss-troopers who reived the farmers of Cumberland, and were preserved, with many intermixtures and interpolations, by the same class of men, who sang old songs and composed new ones, and were not particular where one began and the other ended; so that, in effect, like the grand Greek verses, they were the product of the mind of a class

and of succeeding ages, rather than the single and consummate invention of one genius. The absorbing sense of personal fame, and the jealous guarding of "a name," were not so strong on the spirits of the men of those ages as now. Part of the simplicity and power of the "old masters" of painting is, no doubt, traceable to the humble habit of mind which prevented these violent strivings after personal originality. It was of more importance that a fine picture should be painted than that the man whose name was affixed should be accredited with all the virtue and power of the picture.

Nature worked her will more directly in those days than in these on the minds of inventors of poetry. The dreadful swaddling bands of modern criticism, and the fact that the high places of the field have been so occupied by the great men who sang before criticism became predominant, must greatly prevent that simple, powerful flow of thought and feeling which makes these pathetic songs very affecting to us. But God forbid that we should return to the social conditions out of which this rude simplicity and headlong pathos sprang: the

burning "peel," the "ranshackled" homestead, the murdered good-man, mourning widow, and impaled infant, are a high price to pay for a vivid account of a raid in verse; and the weird fairy tales, more entirely pleasing now that our faith is shaken in the fairies and their spells, were dearly bought by the widespread superstitions which brought so many twilight thrills of fear, and such midnight sweats of horror and pain. "There is an expression of misery in these ballads which appears frequently in Scottish song, and is in some degree peculiar to the compositions of the nation," says the author. We are content that our poets should be a little tied down, if the mind of the peasant may go free of such groundless shadowy creeds, and the home of the peaceful farmer be spared the sight of the seamed visage, battered "sallet," and cruel lance of "Edom o' Gordon."

In the "Essay on an Old Subject" there is the pensive treatment proper to a consideration of "Old Age." Cicero and Henry Taylor, Wendell Holmes and Bulwer, have had each to come to their turn over this theme, as most of us have who live to

"brush out the first gray hair." What has struck us in reading most of the essays of the "pensive" kind on this subject, is that to a fair estimate of the question there should go an unflinching survey of *all the conditions* of human existence, the whole destiny and duty of man. Estimated by a merely earthly standard, there is no doubt something to be said as to the ameliorations of the condition of old age. There is the calmer judgment, the abated passion. There are the sweet daily habitudes and the fruition which early activities have left. We much question whether they actually fortify the mind to any great extent, unless there be a basis much deeper than can be arrived at by looking on that which now appears. An exquisite frank song of Shakespeare speaks nearer the truth in this matter —

> Youth is full of pleasance,
> Age is full of care;
> Youth like summer brave,
> Age like winter bare;
> Age, I do abhor thee,
> Youth, I do adore thee.

"We think," said the aged poet, Rogers, "anything beautiful that is young." We

have seen and could point to many who seem to have reached a basis on which all the remaining delights of age stand like ivied walls without crumbling or falling, whose heart is as fresh, whose smile as sweetly gay as in youth — but our observation has gone to show that this basis is only reached by descending to a rock not subject to the assaults and mutations of time. The most striking thought and the most important, if it be true, in the essay "On Dreams and Dreaming," is that the dream represents the real man, that disguises and accidental aids fall off from us in sleeping, and that we stand exposed to ourselves. If we find ourselves cowardly when attacked in dreams, we shall be sure to be cowards when attacked with our eyes open, etc. Probably, something of our real character follows us into our dreams. Our life is largely the

Stuff as dreams are made of.

But referring to our own character on this theory, we feel a little puzzled. "We are," certainly, at least, "seven." And *which* of the seven is our waking self "it passes the wit of man" to tell. "Methought I was —

there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had — but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called Bottom's dream, because it hath no bottom." The "hempen home-spun," who was practising in "a wood, near Athens," for the approaching nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta, well describes in these words many of our mental night-wanderings. At rare intervals we have what comes nearer to the "clear dream and solemn vision" of Milton. But when dreams are most express and clear, there remain the most bewildering discrepancies. Sometimes we are charging with the Light Brigade, without the least fear, and with a full persuasion that the cannon volleying and thundering vomit forth apple dumplings; while, at other times, we are shrinking in craven terror from the stealthy pursuit of an assassin whom a little boldness would enable us to overmaster. No interpreter follows us out into the open plain of waking thought to tell which of these men is our proper self, and we should be sorry to spend too much time in endeav-

ouring to analyse our character by an instrumentality so variable and vague.

The description of "Mr. Carlyle at Edinburgh" is graphic and most interesting. To those present at the Rectorial Inaugural Address, the sight must have been as attractive in a personal sense as the vision imagined by Wordsworth, when wishing to have —

> Sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
> And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Indeed, to the mind's eye, there is not a little resemblance. Mr. Carlyle's horn is a wreathed and strange instrument, and the sounds it emits as unlike ordinary trumpets as the echoing conch of Neptune is like the cornet of Levy. We think with most ease and complacency of Carlyle when we try to imagine him to be not a man at all, but Proteus rather, in some of his most uncouth forms; a shining Arion's dolphin rolling his wet splendours in classic bays; an Ursa Major tramping the northern solitudes in gloomy silence; a whale of the Arctic Seas, now diving, as if harpooned, into the gray profound, and now spouting his "foam fountains," tinged, it might seem, with his

very life-blood, under the piercing Hyperborean stars. This essay is a tender and loving description, and not a criticism of Carlyle, and we must not be tempted to offer contributions of criticism where, perhaps, the subject is known widely and well enough. "Winter" is one of those pictures of a "season" which, issuing from a hundred pens, never fails to have a subtle charm, because the seasons as they change "are but the varied year." The subject is old, yet we are never satiated; the red leaf-fall of the coming winter will be as pathetic as ever; the first snowflake as full of wonder; its winds as grand; its nights as sublime with stars. And in hundreds of years to come, the prose-poets will be touching off the features of future winters as felicitously, the winds howling as wildly, the streams sealed into a dumbness as deep as now. The question raised in the paper on "Literary Work," is the old and important one of the relation of material to form. To the apprehension of Alexander Smith the form is almost everything —

> All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,

settle down upon a few everlasting truths. "I live; I love; I am happy; I am wretched; I was once young; I must die; are simple and commonplace ideas, which no one can claim as exclusive property; yet out of these has flowed all the poetry the world knows, and all that it ever will know." Into which of these foundation ideas does Milton's description of the rising of the halls of Pandemonium resolve itself? And Shakespeare's reproach of Titania by Oberon? At any rate, the germ is not so precisely *the thing itself* as to leave no room for the ample operation of creative force, and variety of material. An acorn is said to contain the oak, but between the "towering top" of the lord of the forests, ringing with "all throats that gurgle sweet," between its "branchy root," its "hundred rings of years," and the smooth, green, nut-kernelled plaything of a child, there is a wide gulf of difference. The tree destined to withstand the shock of battle and the fury of Baltic blasts, must become not only endlessly varied in mode but in substance. It is this intimate relation of the germinating power and material to the different forms which it

may be made to assume, that symbolises the exceeding intricacy of the question of matter or mode in art or literature.

"The Minister Painter" was the Rev. John Thomson of Duddingstone, near Edinburgh; he seems to have fulfilled his functions as a clergyman to the satisfaction of his parishioners, and also to have made as much at one time as £1800 a year by the sale of his landscapes. With the moral question of the propriety of blending two such professions, we are not disposed here to meddle.

We have long been interested in Thomson's pictures from an artistic point of view. Living remote from the modern influence of landscape art, he wrought upon the old Sir George Beaumont theory that Nature, if not *actually* like, ought to be *made* like something between herself and an old fiddle. He seems to have been stranded between the two positions. When out in the open air he tried to make her look like herself; when finishing indoors he was overpowered by the Orphean magic of the old fiddle, and it happened, according to the Scotch song, concerning one who

Cam' fiddling through the toun,
And danced awa' wi' the exciseman,

the fiddle danced off with the best part of what Nature had distilled and measured on to his canvas out of doors. Yet he had great native power as a painter. He has always reminded us more or less of the written landscape of Professor Wilson, with the exception that there was no "heaviness" in the touch of Christopher North; but there was the same aim after a something unutterable — now gloomy, now sunny — the same obscure and generalised touch — the same eloquent struggle without a perfect mastery of details. If any of our readers wish to see a specimen of his work, they will find one which will give them a respect for Thomson's aims in the Gallery at South Kensington.

The essay on "Sydney Dobell" is perhaps the most *significant* in the book. Here we trace an effort of the maligned and branded "Spasmodic School" to recover its influence. One of its chiefs, of course unable and unwilling to defend *himself*, takes up the cause of another, and with considerable

judgment. Ten years have gone by since the grand assault was made —

> The noise of battle roll'd
> Among the mountains by the winter sea;
> Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
> Had fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,
> King Arthur.

But the tumult has died down. The scoff and the sneer are more than half forgotten, and as cautiously as Falstaff — but with more nobility than that "tun of a man," when he ventured to "come up to breathe" on Shrewsbury Field — Sir Lancelot and Sir Bedivere, not so dead as was supposed, look round and whisper to each other, and begin to strap up each other's armour for new warfare. The school — Alexander Smith, at any rate — had behaved wisely in the interim; no clamours or shrieks or revenges had betrayed weakness to bear or to engage.

But the hour comes round at last; and in far less time than it has taken to "rehabilitate" Cromwell and Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, the Spasmodic School are in a fair way of being set on their feet once more.

We have confessed our leanings in regard to *Balder*, *Festus*, and the rest, but must acknowledge that, if opportunity serve, we will "make one of a party" to revise our impressions of at least *The Life Drama* and *Balder*. The quotations given from the works of Sydney Dobell in this essay have had much to do with this magnanimous resolve; and, whatever may be the result of it, we cannot but express our delight and wonder at the exceeding beauty of two of the fragments quoted here, — one "Amy's Song," the other a ballad, which we will not refrain from quoting entire. Its airy music — its rich yet simple compression of imagery — so ample that a three-volume novel might be written on its suggestions — above all, the sense of mystery and awe which enwrap the listener as its images succeed one another, and seem to pass off into the moonlight or sink into the hills like mist, equals anything of the kind we know. "The earth hath bubbles as the water hath, and these are of them." Here it is —

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine ;

O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads.

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode through the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost,
Where sat a sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile;
The stile is lone and cold;
The burnie, that goes babbling by,
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger, here from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line.

Step out three steps where Andrew stood ;
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear ?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear !

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line.

We remember a picture by Dante Rossetti, called "How They Met Themselves," [1] which breathes the same mysterious import — and in Blake and Fuseli there is that something which sends a thrill of the same nature through the frame — but it is in such poetry as this that we perceive the boundary of the two arts and the superiority of words to deal with the impalpable and the unseen.

"Essayists Old and New" is one of those essays upon essayists by an essayist, which gives one the sort of feeling we have in a room with mirrors upon opposite walls. It

[1] It is of a lover and his mistress who meet the shadowy counterparts of themselves in a wood at eventide.—J. S.

is like what we understand by breeding "in and in." It is like looking at the reflected disc of a microscopic lantern, where the queer creatures are seen preying upon one another, and is as highly amusing. Where an essayist deals with an essayist departed, we can more readily receive his comments. For our own part, the last men we would wish to review are the living essayists. To be perfectly fair and just, to speak what we really feel, and yet to avoid giving pain and provoking hostility which may so soon be repaid in kind — must no doubt be a real difficulty. On the other hand, praise comes awkwardly forth when we remember that we may there also be repaid in kind, and not be quite sure whether we deserve it. Many writers, especially of the essayist class, practically hold the creed of the little Jane Eyre, who, when she was beaten, "struck back again *very hard*" — and though the battle of the frogs and mice is not so terrific as the battles of the gods — it must have great discomforts for the mice and frogs, however amusing it may be to the spectators.

Two poems conclude the volume — one

called "A Spring Chanson," with a good deal of beautiful music in it; the other "Edinburgh," an unfinished piece, intended to be a companion to his former subject of "Glasgow," and containing the raw material of a fine poem.

And now we shall have no more opportunity of glancing over anything from the hand of a brave man of considerable genius, who comported himself well under the two trials of success and attack, and went on to the last with even pace, bating "no jot of heart or hope." Such men — whose advantages of early education and surrounding have not been great — do their best work late in life. The hot-house system of college culture soon discovers and develops the possibilities of the seedling. The Tennysons and the Shelleys are early able to use their native gifts, being provided with apparatus well prepared by previous centuries for their service. But the Alexander Smiths, the Gerald Masseys, the David Grays, and others have to learn how raw their raw material is, while the John Clares must ever remain at a disadvantage. If, however, health and time be given for development,

the nature will often reach its full strength late in life. It would do so more frequently but that the same causes which at first stood in the way of early culture of a superior order, compel them afterwards to waste much energy in the mere procuring of the necessities of life, so that frost and smoke, blast and blight, gnaw and finally destroy many a majestic tree. There is a vast waste in the great workshop of Nature. The Michael Angelo statue heaving through the marble into awful life is often arrested by an unsuspected flaw — and genius often

> Finds its own feather in the fatal dart.

So to some extent it was evidently with the calm and courageous poet and essayist on whose tomb we lay our little wreath of bays with great respect, and as we turn the last leaf of his *Last Leaves*, "sorrowing most of all because we shall see his face no more," let him sing his own requiem in these verses of "The Spring Chanson" —

> Sing to the spring — but through the spring I look
> And see, when fields are bare, the woodlands pale,
> And hear a sad un-mated red-breast wail
> In beechen russets by a leaden brook.

For I am tortured by a boding eye,
That, gazing on the morning's glorious grain,
Beholds late shreds of fiery sunset stain
The marble pallor of a western sky.
Sweet is thy song, oh merle! and sweetly sung
Thy forefathers in our forefathers' ears;
And this — far more than all — the song endears,
In that it knits the old world with the young.
Men live and die, the song remains, and when
I list the passion of thy vernal breath,
Methinks thou singest best to love and death —
To happy lovers and to dying men.

The Bibelot

I.

ELIZABETH RACHEL CHAPMAN, *a great-grand-daughter of Elizabeth Fry, was born at Woodford, Essex, England, in February, 1850, and died shortly after she completed her latest volume. Her first book, a story entitled* Master of All, (*1881,*) *was followed at intervals of a year or two apart by* A Tourist Idyll and other Stories, The New Godiva and other Studies *and* A Comtist Lover and other Studies, *while perhaps her best known work,* A Companion to 'In Memoriam' *was praised by Tennyson in a manner he seldom used to employ. "I am grateful to you," he said, "for your book . . . excellent in taste and judgment." And again, "your commentary is the best ever done." In 1887,* The New Purgatory and other Poems *appeared and then silence seemed to have fallen upon her bookmaking until* A Little Child's Wreath *was brought out by Mr. Elkin Mathews in a limited edition of 350 copies in June, 1894; a second edition being called for in the following January, (1895). Her last book,* Marriage Questions in Modern Fiction,

(*1897.*) *completes the list of works issued during Miss Chapman's lifetime. Finally, in 1904, the* Wreath *was reprinted in Mr. John Lane's* Flowers of Parnassus *with a brief and somewhat-to-seek introduction by Mrs. Alice Meynell; also, with what we could well wish away, six alleged illustrations by W. Graham Robertson. In all these editions the sonnet-sequence bears this inscription:* TO THE HOLY MEMORY OF A LITTLE CHILD AND TO ALL WHO HAVE MOURNED ONE.

II.

One of the most difficult tasks is to rightly appraise the intrinsic value of verse dealing with what comes nearest to the hearts of all men and women alike in all ages and of all or of no religious persuasion whatever, which in itself is as unadorned and simple as the old, old subject of the death of children.

The early reviewer, a minor poet in his own right of utterance, found it expedient and easy to say that he could not help feeling there was something excessive in the issuing of forty sonnets in behalf of a great grief. (*It may be stated here that "the* Wreath *was consecrated to the memory of a little nephew in whose grave" its author lies buried.*) *He* did *admit that her gift of*

expression carried with it "a power of concentration" and that the use of the closing couplet was "in many instances, weighty with beautiful sense beautifully set forth." This was as far as his artistic conscience would permit. We do not say he was altogether wrong but it would be still more hazardous to assert he was altogether right. In this respect the judgment of Mrs. Meynell, herself both mother and poet, has a far greater and far more enduring validity.

"Slightly, with the slightness of tenderness, she reveals the portrait of a wonderful child, one of whom the world was not worthy. His death at seven years old silenced the doubts, not whether he would be good, but whether he would be strong, whether he would have the force, the enterprise to face the strife, to grapple with the ill. The imminence of death was evidently visible in him as it has been in so many children who have died, as it is visible even in an infant who is not to survive infancy — a greater sweetness, a lovelier smile, not imagined by a mother's memory after the child's death, but noted during his life and during his health, and confessed then as the inevitable sign of near mortality. The portrait in A Little Child's Wreath *is an exquisite one of an exquisite subject;*

and unconsciously the author — now that she too has passed from this world we may say it — has shown her own beautiful and noble soul to have been marked for a too early, though a later, passage."

Save for the casual coincidence of Mimma Bella *and the* Wreath *being in sonnet form, we have the direct and positive assurance of Mrs. Lee-Hamilton that her husband never saw Miss Chapman's book until a friend sent him a copy, sometime after his work had been published.*

To a child that which has appeared a dark torrent to those of older growth may easily become as a narrow brook — perhaps this is how it will seem when you and I are reunited to those we have loved and lost. It is the cry of mortal mind — "I am lonely in my journey towards the river." But we are reminded of that wider outlook,

> *"Somewhere is comfort, somewhere faith,*
> *Though thou in outer dark remain;*
> *One sweet, sad voice ennobles death,*
> *And still, for eighteen centuries saith*
> *Softly, — 'Ye meet again!'"*

Once we have reached the journey's end we shall know that love Here is an enduring reality There, where all darkness becomes all daylight: in Dante's great closing line, it is

> *"The Love that moves the sun and all the stars."*

A LITTLE CHILD'S WREATH

By

ELIZABETH RACHEL CHAPMAN.

All the little children
Come from Love and go to Love, when life's
long day is done.

FRANCES BARTLETT.

Our darling loved the meadows and the trees;
Great London jarred him; he was ill at ease
And alien in the stir, the noise, the press;
The city vexed his perfect gentleness.

So, loving him, we sent him from the town
To where the autumn leaves were falling brown,
And the November primrose, pale and dim,
In his own garden-plot delighted him.

There, like his flowers, he would thrive and grow,
We in our fondness thought. But God said: No,
Your way is loving, but not wholly wise;
My way is best—to give him Paradise.

A LITTLE CHILD'S WREATH.

I.

IF where thou walkest, dear, we too could walk,
Close in the footsteps of our little saint,
Now, on this earth; and hear the angels talk,
Living this very life (without life's taint);

If, where thou goest, we could also go,
Calm in the heavenly places, waiting not
For death's enfranchisement to overthrow
The world in us, with every flaw and blot;

If thy small hands that late were clasped in pain
Could clasp us every day to God and thee,
Drawing us childwards, heavenwards again
By their mere whiteness, everlastingly —

Then, humbled and consoled by so much grace,
We might less hungrily desire thy face.

II.

Turn where I will, I miss, I miss my sweet;
By my lone fire, or in the crowded way
Once so familiar to his joyous feet,
I miss, I hunger for him all the day.

This is the house wherefrom his welcome rang
These are the wintry walks where he and I

Would pause to mark if a stray robin sang,
Or some new sunset-flame enriched the sky.

Here, where we crossed the dangerous road, and where
Unutterably desolate I stand,
How often, peering through the sombre air,
I felt the sudden tightening of his hand!

Round me the city looms, void, waste and wild,
Wanting the presence of one little child.

III.

They bid me go forget my grief in Art;
But, dear, what art is so aloof and so
Distinct from thee that it can bring my heart
The balm less all-embracing sorrows know?

Most surely not the painter's; he, alas!
With all the cunning of his craft divine,
But disappoints my sight with what might pass
For beauty — had I never looked on thine.

And music, what can music do but fill
The trembling cup of longing to the brim?
There is no music — save a child's voice still
Soft singing in the dusk the evening hymn.

My very art, my art of song — ah me!
What is it now but one long sob for thee?

IV.

Move through the flames with us, transcendent form,
As of the Son of God, in splendour move!
Divide the anguish, breast with us the storm,
Companion perfect grief with perfect love.

Shine through the burning, more refulgent thou
Than fire with will subdued and mastered pain;
Unharmed sustain us in the furnace now,
And unconsumèd lead us forth again.

Word of the Highest! Mystic effluence
Of That which calms us most, which helps us best!
Compose our hearts, control our shattered sense,
And, in our tribulation, give us rest.

Nerve us to watch the night of weeping through,
Wisely to bear and nobly still to do.

V.

When spring comes and the long, unwonted snows
Fade from the shrouded parks, and little green
Adventurous points show where the crocus grows
And soon the dazzling phalanx will be seen —

Then, in your favourite "flower-walk" my dear,
Will troops of happy, living children play;
But I the shouts, the laughter shall not hear,
For I, dear heart, I shall not pass that way.

Was it not there that bounding at my side,
Last year in glorious sympathy with spring,
You the first crocus suddenly espied
With musical sweet cries of welcoming?

In less frequented spots observed of none,
My steps will stray, bereaved, forlorn, alone.

VI.

Our woodland poet who on Nature's breast
Lay wisely passive through the tranquil years,
Wrote of the comrade whom he loved the best
This praise: She gave me eyes, she gave me ears.

The jocund dance of wind-swept daffodils;
The marvel of the nest the sparrows made;
The secrets of the vales and of the hills
The child had slowlier learned without her aid.

For me, my best instructor in the spells
And wiles of Nature was a seven-years' boy
To whom she had revealed the soul that dwells
Beneath her careless outward robe of joy.

She knew him true; she made him one with her,
Her little prophet and interpreter.

VII.

Deep-curving lashes, long and soft and dark;
Deep gentle eyes that late were lit in heaven
With God's most sacred, most immaculate spark,
To His elect among the children given;

Dark hair, where wistful hands laid on to bless
Might pause, blest rather, overshadowèd
By wings of angels and the blamelessness
That crowned the innocent brow, the gracious head;

A cheek where tremulous colour came and went,
Transparent, sensitive, and smooth and fine;
Well-chiselled features, mutely eloquent
Of the great Master-workman's touch divine —

These were the parts that made a perfect whole,
The faultless temple of a spotless soul.

VIII.

More than the faith of childhood's years he had;
He did not doubt the depth of our desire
That he should be perpetually glad,
Nor dream our joy in him could ever tire.

He trusted all the world; the world was kind,
And men and women loving; so he went
To dwell with strangers undismayed in mind,
And smiled, and did not deem it banishment.

In every heart he knew he found a home,
A sanctuary in every human face;
And when God, missing him in heaven, said: Come
It did not seem a solitary place.

I think he only flushed in sweet surprise
To see the golden floor beneath his eyes.

IX.

So docile was my dear, so wise to know
And love the tender rule he should obey,
So childly tractable, withal so slow
To childish wrath, so clean from passion's sway,

The momentary doubt would sometimes rise
If in the patient child reposed the will
The man would need, the force, the enterprise
To face the strife, to grapple with the ill.

I know not, but I know that manhood's crown
Was ever meekness, since the children's friend
Rode humbly royal through the palm-strewn town
Unto a stern retributory end.

I see foreshadowed in that seven-years' span
The fulness of the stature of a man.

X.

From heaven to heaven,[1] along an azure sea,
Fanned by light airs, his little sail was set;
Young angels went with him for company,
And smiles and sunshine all the way he met.

His pretty mates and he had communings
So fair, he could possess his soul in peace,
And scorn to be disturbed by earthly things
And chafed by trivial jars that soon must cease.

Why should he fret who was in sight of port
Before almost he left his native shore,
And did but change a well-beloved resort
For one that would content and charm him more?

His great serenity to him was given
Because his conversation was in heaven.

XI.

"Flowers in my garden! Flowers!" Love's willing thrall,
Responsive ever to her tyrant's will,
Sped through the house, nor heeded other call,
To where, without, he stood and claimed her still.

"My garden" in the town required the grace
He had to call it such — a dust-grimed square —

[1] "Heaven lies about us in our infancy."—*Wordsworth.*

But his content emparadised the place,
And made it bud and blossom everywhere.

"Where are your flowers?" I mocked, for all around,
Under the dismal walls, smoke-tainted green,
Dim laurel, sad spent crocus on the ground,
Sad ivy-tendrils, could alone be seen.

But while I mocked, laughing and kissing too —
Lo! three small stems of scylla frail and blue.

XII.

Under the flowers he loved my flower lies,
Pansy, and primrose pale, and violet,
And in my heart the season's sweetness dies,
And all my joy is faded to regret.

My garden, mine, is his new-planted grave,
Beneath the elm where birds, new-mated, sing,
Whose green-tipped branches in the west-wind wave,
And make their glad obeisance to the spring.

Tell me not spring is fair and fraught with hope,
Bid me not go seek solace at her hands!
Spring is my autumn, my year's downward slope,
And he is lying where the tall elm stands.

My only spring, my only hope is this —
Soon, soon to follow where my treasure is.

XIII.

I know not by what sorcery of sleep
Last night I held him radiant in my arms,
Yet knew him soon to die, but did not weep,
That he might think death blesses us, not harms.

In health, in love, in life, it seemed my lot
To tell my lovely dear that he must go
Where we who were so one with him could not,
But needs must linger, if we would or no.

And musing how I best could keep him brave,
And knowing well the hopes and fears of seven,
And well the liveliest joy his heart could have,
I smiled and told him flowers grew in heaven.

But while to his, athirst, my lips I pressed,
The bright face fell; he thought to stay was best.

XIV.

"Ill-placed my heart; I love another's child," [1]
Sings wistfully, and sighs, a bard of France;
And ah! the hunger in the accents mild,
The pain behind the smiling countenance!

Vexed with the ache of uncompanioned souls,
His playmate at his mother's side he sees,

[1] " J'ai mal placé mon cœur — j'aime l'enfant d'un autre."—
Sully Prudhomme.

And scarce his tender jealousy controls
When swift he springs upon his father's knees.

Nay, poet, sing for joy, exult and sing!
Thy dear one lives, though not for thee his heart;
He lives, he breathes, he ails not anything;
Watch him and love, and, praising God, depart.

'Tis but his father sweetly rivals thee,
While death, alas! requires my love of me.

XV.

When in the twilight, round my lonely room,
Leaving the pictured features that I love,
My sad eyes, aching in the childless gloom,
From one mute image to the other rove,

They dwell with most repose, most solacement
On the fair stripling, strong, erect and calm,
Of Andrea's dream, from whose sweet lips "Repent!"
Fell soft, I think, like odoriferous balm.

Deep, gentle eyes; pure, finely-moulded mouth,
Like his but now I looked my last upon;
He seems my angel grown to god-like youth,
And my belovèd seems the young St. John.

With even such loveliness of soul and limb
Time and God's grace would have anointed him.

XVI.

Within a petal of the blessed Rose,
Of Dante's blessed Rose of Paradise,
Sits my belovèd, radiant in repose,
Love on his lips, and laughter in his eyes.

There, with the tender, jocund company
Of little hurrying folk [1] that haste to heaven,
To him the sunshine of the life to be,
To him the perfectness of joy is given.

Above the Flower's mystic heart of light
His rose-leaf curls, a perfumed, delicate nest,
And whitely folds around his raiment white,
Encircling him in beauty and in rest.

And in and out, like bees, the angels flit,
With stores of bliss that he may feed on it.

XVII.

If haply, dear, I may to thee attain,
And be, I too, a child in heaven with thee,[2]
Let me for evermore a child remain,
And where thou dwellest, let my dwelling be.

A childish-lowly seat, but next thine own,
If this, through perfect grace, should be my lot,

1 "Questa festinata gente a vera vita."—*Dante.*

2 "I think we shall all be children to begin with, when we get to heaven."—*Tennyson.*

I would not climb to any loftier throne,
And loftier hopes I would remember not.

The elder life brought strife, not peace on earth,
The growing years dismay and hate and feud;
To share for ever thy unconscious mirth —
This were my heaven and my beatitude;

And all the lore that saints and sages teach
Were foolishness beside thy prattling speech.

XVIII.

Like Mary's mother, moving not her gaze,
For all her singing, from her daughter's smile,
I would give endless thanks, give endless praise,
And look on thee, thee only, all the while.

Close to thy side, my wound made whole again,
I would not raise my eyes to where, serene,
With Rachel, Ruth, and Beatrice, freed from pain,
Sits regal, crowned with angels, heaven's queen.

I would not even glance to where he stands,
Proud at her feet, while loud his *Aves* swell,
With wings outspread, intent on her commands,
The mighty Love,[1] God's herald, Gabriel.

How could I choose but ever feast on this,
To see my heart's delight again in bliss?

1 "Quell' amor che primo lì discese."—*Dante.*

XIX.

Where jaded London pauses, climbing north,
For very weariness, and leaves large room
For May in magic vesture to come forth
And spread the hills with fern and yellow broom,

I go to breathe; I go, without my dear,
And think how he, with ball or mimic bow,
Danced up and down the happy slopes last year,
His eye joy-kindled and his cheek aglow.

I hear him call my name; I see the far
Blue distance shine beyond the hawthorn-flowers;
I cry to God to give me back my star,
My sweet, to give me back those golden hours.

How cool upon the heights the breezes blew!
How swift into the air his arrow flew!

XX.

At midnight, in my dream, a cry was heard,
As of the bridegroom's coming. Through the black
And solitary void no echo stirred
Sounded this melody: He has come back!

A little moment, and behold once more
I saw him, as he lived, before me stand,
But to a deeper hue than erst it wore
By largesse of the sun his cheek was tanned.

They said that gipsies had decoyed my love,
And he, o'er hill and dale, through waste and wood,
Where'er such pensioners of nature rove,
Had shared their wandering life and found it good.

In careless joy glad day had followed day;
And that was why he was so long away.

XXI.

And wilt thou never feel the hurrying tide
Of virile blood pulse quick along thy veins,
And stand magnificent in manly pride,
And know a man's fierce joys and glorious pains?

Strong vital thrills that lift the human up,
Transfigured, rapt, to mix with the divine;
Beats of the music, foamings of the cup,
Filled to the splendid brim with youth's new wine —

These wilt thou never taste — not taste the bliss
Of our mere being, mere recurrent breath,
Mere oneness with the life in all that is,
The cosmic energies that laugh at death —

Not know the moments when some god in us
Seems to exalt and crown our manhood thus?

XXII.

And when the god speaks, when potential force
Springs into actual, as the bud to flower,
And, like a storm-fed stream along its course,
Rush the first promptings of creative power;

When from mere man we grow to maker, bard,
Sage, prophet, scholar, artist; scale the heights;
Assume the sceptre; drink the whole, unmarred,
Completed draught of richest life's delights;

When we control and rule, inspire and lead,
Mould laws for men, bid empires feel our sway,
Probe nature's secrets, wrest them to our need,
Live glorious years in one heroic day —

This full fruition of our human lot
Wilt thou for evermore inherit not?

XXIII.

Dying a child, thou wilt not see the birth
Of beauty from the blossom-foam of May
Again at all, or June enchant the earth
With scent of hedge-rose and of new-mown hay.

No more the pageant of October woods
Wilt thou behold, nor feel the mystical
Hushed charm of nature in her wintry moods
Of weird white silence any more at all.

Unseen by thee to mingle with the skies
The alp shall rear his everlasting snow;
Unhallowed by the wonder in thine eyes
Through the clear heaven the harvest moon shall go;

Unblest by gaze of thine perennial rills
Breathe answering peace among the little hills.

XXIV.

Nor thus untimely dying, shall the throes
Of mightier births touch thee, afar, asleep,
As back to youth divine the old world grows,
And forward into light the lost truths leap.

Not thine, upborne upon the gathering wave
Of spirit-forces, perfecting the man,
Thy joy to seek, thy crown of joy to have
In newly leading him to Canaan.

The toiler, human-free, and strong in might
And meekness, shall not come within thy ken;
Nor woman rising to her pristine height
Sublime of patriot and of citizen;

Nor that slow loosening of the secular chain
That binds the brutes in dumb, vicarious pain.

XXV.

Shall Love not bless thee? Shalt thou ever miss
His mysteries of healing and content,
His balm of Gilead garnered in a kiss,
The bounteousness of his good government?

Lo, where he walks in pureness beauty springs,
And flowers of gladness where his feet have trod,
And all the way from off his rainbow wings
Drop to the earth benignant dews of God.

Who come within his gentle seigniory,
Whom his hand touches and his lips caress
Are straightway set from thrall of evil free
And proudly tread the ways of righteousness.

Alas! shall Love, the saviour, not draw nigh
At all to thee? Shall he too pass thee by?

XXVI.

Again my dear was with me yesternight,
But now his brow was vexed, his eye was dim,
And he distressed and tired and worn and white,
As when the pains of death gat hold on him.

On the bare deck of some tall phantom ship,
Tossed by rude waves, unnursed and lone he lay,
No tender hand to cool his fevered lip,
No voice love's little language soft to say.

Amazed with grief to succour him I flew,
And made his hard bed smooth and warm and fair,
And one faint flickering smile of comfort drew,
Which pierced my heart and still inhabits there.

Yet, waking, grieve I less, dear love! I see
How far more softly Death hath pillowed thee.

XXVII.

Fondly the wise man said that foolishness
In a child's heart was bound, and said the rod
Could perfect that which surelier one caress
Lays, love-baptized, before the feet of God.

And fondly he, the passionate saint who steeped
His virgin soul in Carthaginian mire,
Found in the weanling babe that laughed and leaped
Glad from its mother's arm, hate, spite and ire.

They erred. The child is, was, and still shall be
The world's deliverer; in his heart the springs
Of our salvation ever rise, and we
Mount on his innocency as on wings.

I, at the least, who knew and ever grieve
One little lovely soul, must so believe.

XXVIII.

More grateful to the human heart and more
Wise with the wisdom human mothers earn
By pangs of birth and pains of loss his lore
Who bade mankind of little children learn.

Pure, he could feel their splendid guilelessness;
Kingly, he recognized their royalty;
Longsuffering, he was one with them, nor less
Grandly magnanimous than they was he.

He dared to judge mankind best fed by truth,
Best led by love, desiring most of all —
Not lures of sin — but grace to walk like Ruth
Where natural ties and home affections call.

And so he "took a child," with father's touch,
And therefore said God's kingdom was of such.

XXIX.

A quiet southern bay; a quiet sea
That scarcely breaks along the level sands;
An ecstasy of little children's glee;
A weight of grief that no one understands.

Slow-moving sails, with curves of grace complete
As ever beauty-loving pencil drew;
A ceaseless play of pretty hands and feet;
A want for ever deep, for ever new.

Peace on the teeming earth, goodwill and peace
In the clear blue and floating cloudlets white;
Crownèd the land with joy of her increase;
Quenched my desire and vanished my delight.

A sea-bird said: I know, I know the pain;
He will not see the summer-tide again.

XXX.

Kind little lad, with dark, disordered hair,
Who friendly-wise, forsake your half-built fort
To make me in the sand a high-backed chair,
So kind, so keen to join the livelier sport—

Haste to your trenches! Fly! To arms! to arms!
The foe prepares to storm your citadel;
Your comrades sound excursions and alarms,
And those stout hands must fight that build so well.

Laugh, happy soul!—nor dream you brought me tears.
His beauty had you not—for that the earth
Holds not his equal—but you had his years,
Almost his eyes, and something of his mirth;

And one stray lock on your bare neck that curled
Made sudden twilight of the summer world.

XXXI.

What draws us childwards? Cherub charm and grace,
The frolic kitten and the tricksy elf,
Or heaven reflected in the serious face,
And the divine unconscious of itself?

What art makes magnets of the helpless hands
That fitfully caress and feebly touch,
What sorcery entwines the flowery bands
That chafe so sweetly and compel so much?

For thee I know not, but for me I know;
I know the charm that everywhere, abroad,
At home, and wheresoever I may go,
Enthrones the child my sovereign and my lord.

Not beauty, no, nor grace, nor gleams of heaven;
The passport to my heart is — being seven.

XXXII.

I dreamed I did but dream my love was dead,
And all for nought had been my long complaint;
He had come back and stood beside my bed,
Grown tall and straight and fair as Andrea's saint.

He has come back! Again the tidings rang;
Again my pulses leaped with wild delight;
Again the choric stars together sang,
And joyous pæans sounded through the night.

But with the calm of heaven on me he smiled,
There where in feverish ecstasy I lay,
As on a mother her home-coming child,
When childish things have long been put away.

"'Tis thou art now my care," looks such an one,
"And I thy stay, thy comforter, thy son."

XXXIII.

Where loving Francis shed on Umbrian ways
And fruitful slopes of sun-kissed Apennine
The benediction of his cheerful praise,
The oil and spikenard of his speech benign,

I wandered, musing how so dark an age
Had borne a heart so pitying and so sweet,
To whom all bruisèd things made pilgrimage —
All hunted things — to shelter at his feet.

And fancy, wistful-fond, began to paint
A greeting yonder in the far-off land,
And how the merciful Assisian saint
Had taken mine, rejoicing, by the hand;

Not so much glad that he was safe and whole,
As proud to welcome a companion soul.

XXXIV.

The lowliest timid creature that had life
Had from the prophet tenderest look and word;
He saved the lambs from torture and the knife,
And bare them in his bosom like his Lord.

While furious men through blood to greatness won,
And women's eyes with weeping still were wet,
He taught his "sister birds" their antiphon,
Or fondled "little brother leveret."

Now in his native heaven serene he moves,
With comrades wise, benignant, courteous, kind,
With whatsoever succours, yearns and loves,
With men of godlike and of childlike mind;

And near him walks, familiar and at ease,
My angel-love, for he too was of these.

XXXV.

With him too gracious Pity made her home,
And furled her sad soiled wings in sweet content,
Forgetful that it is her lot to roam
From age to age in woeful banishment.

His small heart seemed to her no narrow space,
But, like God's many mansions, wide and fair;
And so she chose it for a resting place,
And hospitably she was harboured there.

And grateful for the boon, she taught him lore
Of heaven, and how the tender angels know
The merciful are blest for evermore,
Although the wise and prudent say not so;

And how God holds him least among the least
Who is not pitiful to bird and beast.

XXXVI.

Superbly still they vaunt their ancient pride,
Those lofty eyries of old Italy
That ruled the land when Francis lived and died,
Glorious in might, erect, and fair to see.

Perugia's portals and Siena's towers,
And dear Assisi's walls that shine afar,
What seem they to this distant age of ours? —
Lairs of fierce men that took delight in war.

Yet, while we deprecate, our Europe groans
Beneath her armaments the livelong day;
Her peoples cry for bread — we give them stones,
And crush and curse with mailèd peace alway;

And still to Moloch babes are sacrificed
By men that call upon the name of Christ.

XXXVII.

Yea, lonely still and evermore without,
Shamed and forgotten by the weed-grown door,
Standeth the Christ, while rings the battle-shout,
While statesmen wrangle and while madmen roar.

Spurned is the lord of peace, his message spurned
As when his people thorns for solace gave;
As when Servetus or when Cranmer burned,
Or England dared to side against the slave.

Hark! from the savage wilds they go to tame,
Hark, what discordant sounds affront the ear!
His very priests, contending in his name,
Make it a thing of hate and scorn and fear.

Only the child his loving liegeman is,
And lays a timid hand, consoled, in his.

XXXVIII.

Blest are the trusting eyes that close in sleep
Or e'er the soilure of the world they see,
And blest art thou — I feel it while I weep —
Yea, well is thee and happy shalt thou be.

Blest is the guileless heart that never guessed
How faith is tainted and how love defiled,
But only knew them fresh from God and dressed
In whiteness in the fancy of a child.

Blest is the voice that never strove nor cried,
Nor swerved from truth, nor raged in vain desire;
Blest is the hour in which our darling died,
Saved from the evil, rescued from the fire.

Bow we the head; cease we the piteous knell;
God is the judge, and doeth all things well.

XXXIX.

I do thee wrong to mourn thee; I blaspheme
The Power that gave thee joy, that gives thee rest,
And while I chafe and fret, and sigh and dream,
Lulls thee in slumber on its sheltering breast.

This earth was not for thee, oh, not for thee
The turmoil and the wearying storm and stress,
The hungering hope deferred for good to be,
The mocking shows, the maddening lovelessness.

Thou spirit-child, for soothing formed, not strife!
Thou gracious tender joy an instant given!
Thou didst but beautify and bless our life
A little while to perfect us for heaven;

And see, for us hath life become a prayer
That we may merit grace to meet thee there.

XL.

Rest little love! rest well my heart's desire!
Sleep while the storm-winds blow, the furious rage;
Sleep till the foes of God and goodness tire;
Sleep till the earth fulfils her pilgrimage.

Sleep where the slender snow-drop bells in peace
Kiss the small crystals off the hoary grass;
Sleep where all angry things and hurtful cease,
Where calms brood ever and where tempests pass.

Hushed by the gracious hand of pitying death,
I hush thee too with my low song of praise;
Thou gentlest thing that ever yet drew breath.
My thanks for this thy rest to heaven I raise!

Content I leave with God what once I missed,
And keep upon thy grave my Eucharist.

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